

# Landlord Engagement During the COVID 19 Pandemic and Beyond

# Webinar Logistics

- All participants are muted, and the webinar is being recorded. The recording and materials will be sent out next week.
- If you are having technical difficulties, please send a message in the Q&A and we will work to support you.
- **Crowd source!** Use the Chat function to ask questions, share staffing strategies and ideas with each other. Make sure to select "Everyone" when sending your message so everyone can see it.

# Introductions

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*Who is in the room?*

*Please put your name,  
pronouns, organization,  
and favorite part of Fall  
in the chat if you are  
here virtually!*



# Logistics

- Please keep yourself on mute except during the Q&A period if you are attending virtually.
- If you need help or have a question, please put it in the Chat box.
- **Crowd source!** Use the Chat function to ask questions, share landlord engagement strategies and ideas with each other.

# Why are we here?

- To flip the focus from clients working with landlords to creating agency relationships with landlords
- To learn why it's important to talk to landlords and property managers about participating in housing programs that benefit clients
- To learn how to develop strategies for landlord engagement
- To understand how to utilize ESG-CV funds to further this work

# ESG-CV Landlord Related Resources

# ESG-CV Notice Flexibilities: Landlord Incentives

Landlord Incentives can total 3x cost of rent **charged for the unit** and can cover:

Signing bonuses up to 2x rent	Repair damages not covered by security deposit
Security Deposits	Maintenance to expedite turnover
Referral bonuses for landlords who recruit other landlords	Cleaning units



# New ESG-CV Notice

- On July 19, 2021, HUD released a new [notice](#) guiding the ESG-CV program offering flexibilities:
- Sponsor-based Rental Assistance- allowable when necessary to use RRH and HP to re-house program participants quickly in permanent housing where landlords might not otherwise be willing to rent to them
  - Provided through a contract that:
  - (1) is between the recipient or subrecipient and a separate government agency, instrumentality, or nonprofit organization (“sponsor”) that owns or leases dwelling units; and
  - (2) provides that rental assistance payments shall be made to sponsor and that program participants shall occupy such assisted units.
- Renters Insurance - if it is necessary to obtain or maintain housing

# New ESG-CV Notice

- On July 19, 2021, HUD released a new [notice](#) guiding the ESG-CV program offering flexibilities:
- Legal Services- are limited to those services necessary to help program participants obtain housing or keep a program participant from losing housing where they currently reside
- Assisting Program Participants with Subleases – includes a legally valid sublease with the primary leaseholder for the unit. Expands the permanent housing options for individuals and families experiencing and at risk of homelessness

# Flexibilities to Address Common Challenges

Challenge	Flexibilities
<b>“Units not meeting FMR and habitability standards”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rent Reasonableness Waiver</li><li>• Mitigation Funds</li><li>• ESG-CV Landlord Incentives for repairs</li></ul>
<b>“Currently our landlords are asking for 3 times the rental amount and many are asking for clean credit.”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pitch to small, “Mom and Pop” landlords - administrative ease, timely monthly rent, tenant and landlord support</li><li>• Landlord incentives and benefits</li><li>• Tenant training and support</li><li>• Risk mitigation strategies</li></ul>
<b>“Some landlords do not want to do a year lease due to the eviction moratorium and preferring a month to month.”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ESG does not require a 1-year lease (unless PBRA)</li><li>• Consistent rent</li><li>• Support to quickly fill unit vacancies</li></ul>

# Landlord Engagement Models

# Models for Landlord Engagement Strategies

## Program Level

- Staff may include: Housing Navigator, Case Worker, Landlord Liaison, Retention Specialist
- Landlord outreach
- Tenant and landlord support / mediation
- Supportive services / case management
- Landlord benefits and incentives (signing bonus, higher security deposit)

## Systems Level

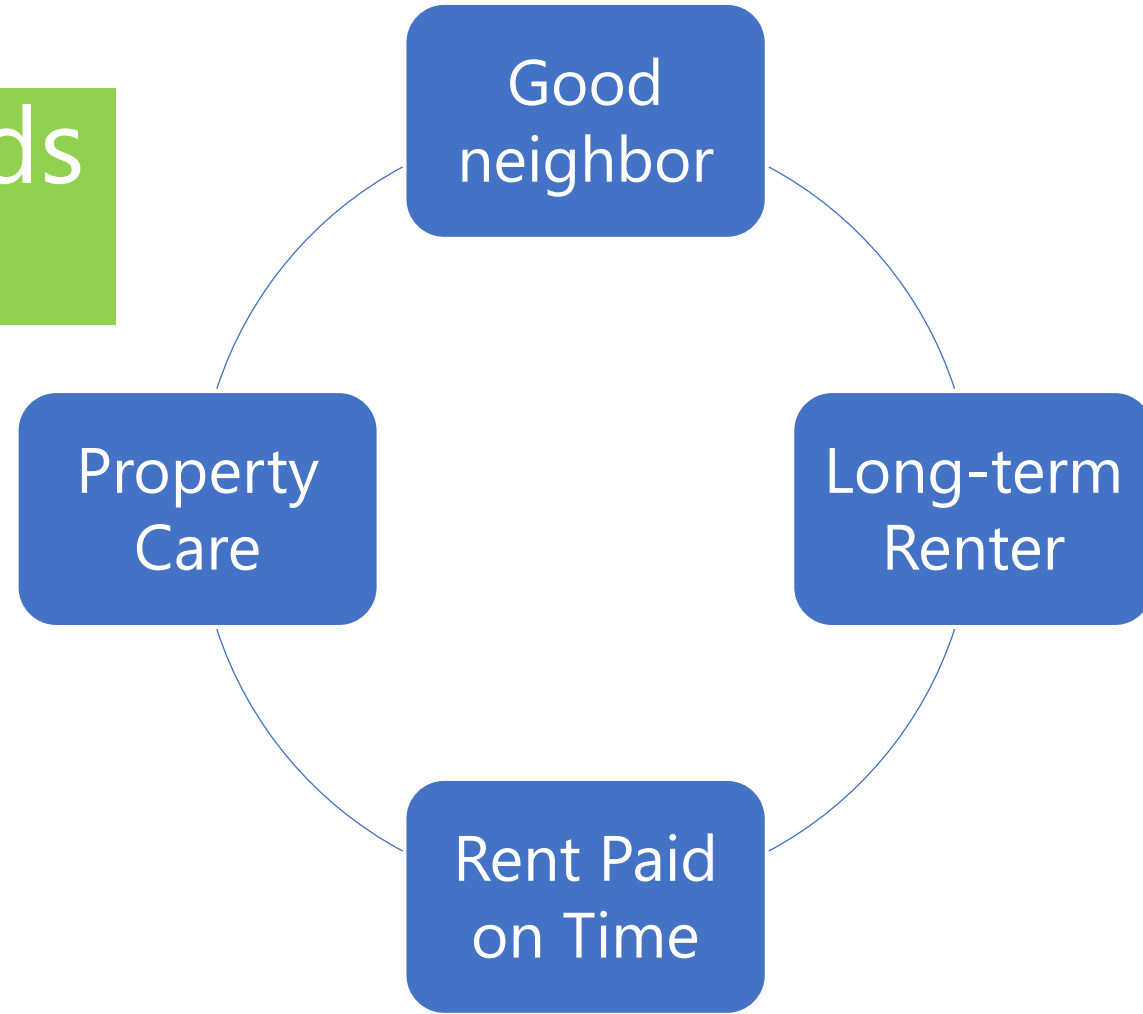
- Shared documents and MOUs
- Coordination meetings
- Landlord advisory group
- Shared landlord database/list
- Community-wide marketing and outreach activities
- Landlord benefits and incentives (risk mitigation fund, inspection assistance)
- Connected to EHV's, Section 8, CoC and ESG RRH

# Understanding Landlords

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- Rental housing is a business
- They are looking to reduce risk
- Maximize return on investment
- Small landlords are the largest supplier of affordable housing in the country

# Four Things Landlords Want



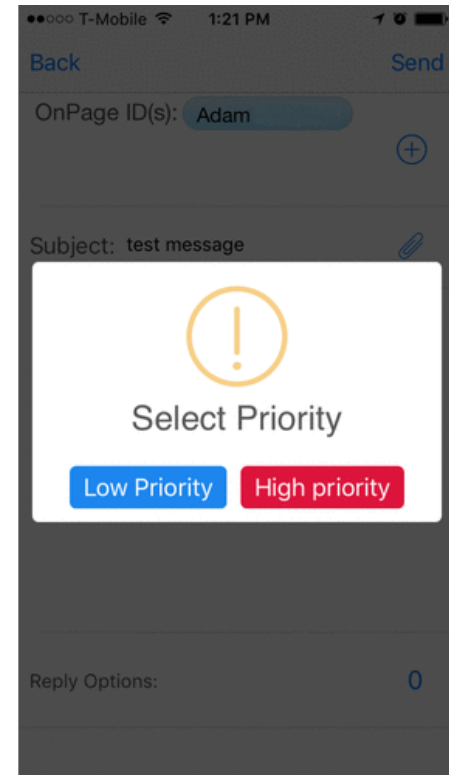


# Understand your Landlords

- Identify landlords known to be flexible with evictions, criminal histories, pets or other tenant screening barriers
- Identify landlords willing to be flexible with rent/utilities in exchange for program support and services
- Survey landlords to understand the type of tenants in their buildings, nature of building and neighborhoods and other “soft” information
- Make sure you are coordinating with other providers to avoid landlord confusion, fatigue or other issues
- Use/build community/agency database to log Landlord unit types and amounts

# Working With Landlords

- Understand landlord priorities:
  - Rent payments
  - Apartment maintenance
  - Peaceful community
  - Keeping units filled
  - Assistance with problem tenants



# Rules of Engagement

- When a program is launched, there should be a written strategy of how to engage landlords best suited to the population.
  - Ongoing ties to the participant.
- Landlords should know everything they're agreeing to.
- Landlords deserve an answer every time.

# Benefits to Landlords

- Communication and introduction to the potential tenant
- Of course, money- (vouchers and mitigation fees)
- Another party in the transaction
- Someone to help things end well
- Participation in ending homelessness

# What's in it for the Landlords?

- Landlord/Tenant Education Class (pay rent, keep your unit clean, be a good neighbor)
- Protective Payee Services
- Budgeting Services
- Lease Addendum
- Additional Housing Support to address housing/lease issues
- Tenant Home Visits
- Finder Service— your program can be a go-to source for filling housing vacancies

**NEVER FORGET  
THE MOST  
IMPORTANT  
THING!!  
\$\$\$\$\$\$**

# Landlord Incentives in a Difficult Market

<u>Do's</u>	<u>Don'ts</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cut checks fast and on time</li><li>• Offer double security deposit</li><li>• Risk Mitigation Fund</li><li>• Help with minor repairs</li><li>• Be a steady referral source of new tenants; reduce need to advertise</li><li>• Return calls within 1 business day</li><li>• Staff teach “good tenant” skills and provide guidance on presentation at apartment viewing</li><li>• If problems can't be solved, assist tenant to move out without an eviction</li><li>• Encourage being part of a mission to end homelessness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Just give client a list of vacant units</li><li>• Send the client with literature on the program to explain to landlords themselves</li><li>• Explain too much over phone/email before viewing the unit</li><li>• Be negative/critical of the prospective tenant or program</li><li>• Take too long to follow-up with financial requests</li><li>• Accept “no” too quickly</li></ul>

# Resource Development

- Database of affordable housing
- Database of availability in various housing programs
  - Rapid Rehousing
  - Permanent Supportive Housing
  - Population-specific Housing – elderly, Veterans, etc.
  - Housing Authority Vouchers
- HUD Landlord Engagement Toolkit

# Finding and Keeping Landlords in a Difficult Market

- Developing and maintaining landlord relationships is ideally someone's full time job, or is intentionally built into someone's job responsibilities
- Housing search is proactive and continuous
- Landlord incentives are well-designed to minimize landlord risk
- Program and staff ALWAYS do what they promise...and don't promise what they can't do.
- Calls from landlords are returned quickly
- Checks are cut quickly.

**Landlords are Your Second Client!**



# Step 1

- Learn about the existing units in your service area.
- Contact the property managers and landlords and introduce yourselves/agency.
  - Property managers are very conscious of 2 things:
    - Vacant units: vacant units generate \$0 – complexes make money when there are tenants in all their units.
    - Fair housing: fair housing is a big deal and property managers must affirmatively further fair housing.

## Step 2

- Know the rules!
- The following issues can make a potential tenant ineligible:
  - Legal history
  - Poor rental history
  - Credit problems
  - Unpaid utilities
  - History of eviction, foreclosure, or an unpaid balance with a previous landlord

# Key Elements to Developing Landlord Partnerships

- HONESTY
  - Be truthful about what is in your control and what is not
  - Don't promise something that will not happen
  - Be clear about your role
- INTEGRITY
  - Always follow through with what you say you will provide/do
  - Be accountable to the landlord, keep them informed of any changes

# Marketing Your Program

# Why Market Your Program

- In many ways, you are “selling a product” in the open market. You have to convince property owners that your “product” will meet their needs and address their concerns.
- Marketing the program is one of the best tools to use in developing a pool of landlords and management companies who are willing to rent directly to your clients.

# Who do you market to?

- “Mom and Pop” landlords
- Property management organizations
- Other service providers



# How do you market your program?

- Flyers
- Ads in local newspapers
- Social Media
- Host a landlord event
- Cold calling
- Direct mail
- Attend Health Fairs/ community events-  
host a table
- Radio



How do you market  
your program?

Create a Landlord Newsletter

Have an Open House at your agency and highlight  
your housing program

5 Minute Mission Moments

Direct mail to local real estate agencies.

Community Champions



**MUST HAVE FOOD!**

Intentionally recognize landlords who are participating. (Everyone loves a prize!)

Ask a successful client to present at the event.

Ask questions of those who attend and BE READY to answer!

## Hosting a Landlord Event

# Leave no stone unturned...

- Attend local meetings such as:
  - Faith Communities
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - County Commission Meetings
  - Supportive Service Meetings
  - Rotary Clubs
  - Others?
- **KEEP SHOWING UP!!!**



# Marketing Toolbox

- Agency Brochure
- Program Brochure
- One-page informational handouts or fact sheets
- Letters explaining the program or agency
- Client Success Stories
- Testimonial letters from other landlords who have partnered and benefitted from the experience
- Business Cards
- Soft version too



# What do you offer that might help sway a landlord to work with you?

- How long you will provide rental assistance is information that may/may not be shared at the **BEGINNING** of the housing application process because it can affect how the property manager scores your client's application.
- If you have mitigation funds available this is information that should **DEFINITELY** be passed on to the landlord.
- Case Management is an asset!

# CM-Landlord Relationship-Building

- Make contact with the landlord and introduce yourself/program
  - Name/title
  - Role/organization
  - 2 key benefits you will offer to landlords
  - What is the “ask” or next step?
- Elevator Pitch Activity!



# Equity & Landlord Engagement

# Building Equity: Housing Search- Bias in Housing Choice

Bias can influence how housing opportunities are offered to participants

Client choice is central—don't make assumptions—ask where someone is willing to live. Staff need to respect client choice and empower clients to seek housing where they choose to live

Staff need to be responsive to how their own implicit bias, and clients' personal history of experiencing racism or other forms of discrimination and injustice, can influence client choice

**TIP:** Promote strong relationships with clients to facilitate honest conversations about housing choice and discrimination in a way that clients feel safe to share

**TIP:** Set up team and supervision structures to support open dialogue about housing choice and housing discrimination and a culture of working together towards solutions.

# Fair Housing

All local jurisdictions receiving HUD funds have an obligation to affirmatively further fair housing choice. This typically happens through a community Consolidated Plan.

Get connected with government and non-profit agencies working on fair housing locally to partner on and amplify your landlord outreach and education efforts. Some communities have a Fair Housing Center.

HUD's [Fair Housing Planning Guide](#) provides more information



# Dealing with Housing Discrimination

- Partner with local legal services and fair housing organizations to educate landlords and to report discriminatory landlords. These organizations can also train housing locator staff
- Don't do business with landlords that discriminate—this is harmful to participants
- Ease the burden on participants by lining up as many positive landlord partnerships as possible

# Questions/Comments/Solutions

# Resources

- [LLE: Reset Your Community's Critical Partnerships During COVID Response](#)
- [Planning a Housing Surge to Accelerate Rehousing Efforts in Response to COVID-19](#)
- [Landlord Engagement Summary](#)
- [HUD Landlord Engagement Toolkit](#)
- [USICH Landlord Engagement](#)
- [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Summary of ESG Program Waivers and Alternative Requirements \(hudexchange.info\)](#)
- [Rapid Re-Housing Landlord Benefits Checklist - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)
- [Tools for Landlords with Tenants Impacted by COVID-19](#)
- [Landlord Engagement in the Time of COVID-19](#)
- [Landlord Engagement Spotlight: RentConnect in Miami-Dade County](#)
- [Tenant Guidance: Rental Repayment Plans](#)
- [Landlord Engagement & Recruitment Desk Book \(2015\)](#)
- [Housing Search Assistance Toolkit](#)

# Resources from other Communities

- [Homeless Hub Landlord toolkit](#)
- [Landlord Mitigation Program \(wa.gov\)](#)
- [Landlord Recruitment and Retention | Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness \(cceh.org\)](#)

# Contacts

- For additional information or assistance, contact:
  - **Department of Housing and Urban Development:**
  - [HUD Exchange Ask-A-Question \(AAQ\) Portal](#)
  - **Mande Ellison:** [mande@collaborative-solutions.net](mailto:mande@collaborative-solutions.net)

Thank you to the TAC inc. for co-creating these slides