CA HCD ESG-CV Training Series:
Landlord Engagement & Incentives Foundation
Learning Objectives

1. Gain an understanding of emerging and best practices related to landlord engagement and retention
2. Be able to work within communities to evaluate current landlord engagement practices and recommend systemic changes (centralized landlord recruitment or engagement system)
3. Gain a working knowledge of how to conduct effective landlord outreach, including landlord-focused approaches to recruit, engage and retain landlords
4. Understand common landlord concerns and have action-based solutions for addressing these concerns
5. Identify all eligible uses of ESG-CV funds for landlord incentives, as well as other sources of funding

Thank you to Miami-Dade County CoC, Houston Coalition for the Homeless, and Connecticut Balance of State for providing materials that supported the development of this training
Training Agenda

- System-level Planning
- Equity Considerations
- Financial Incentives
- Using ESG-CV and Other Funds
- Marketing and Recruitment
- Landlord Retention
- Tenant Retention
Landlords want to be sure that:

- Rent is paid on time
- Property is respected
- Tenants are good neighbors
- Property doesn’t suffer from vacancies or evictions
Why plan at a system level?

- Avoid duplicated or redundant engagement efforts
- Good landlord engagement is a matter of racial equity
- Ensure providers and direct staff are not competing against each other for limited resources
- Communicate a clear and coherent message about the need to community members and landlords
- Frontload the engagement process—reaching out about individual units is way more time intensive than investing in building relationships that will yield more units regularly
- Ensure that appropriate rental units are secured – location and proximity to transportation might matter to you and determine if there are certain geographic areas you will target and areas you will not invest time in
System-Level Planning

Designate a dedicated organization that will coordinate strategy and engagement on behalf of the system

Responsibilities

- Set up system-level workgroup dedicated to landlord engagement and retention
- Provide staff for recruiting and maintain relationships on behalf of the system
- Assess how the current environment has shifted landlord practices or preferences
- Establish financial incentive package to attract landlords
System-Level Planning

Create a landlord engagement team that will execute necessary activities to stand up and maintain a robust landlord engagement effort

Functions

- Active recruitment, engagement, and "deal-making" with landlords
- Secure units that will pass HQS inspection
- Develop standardized landlord agreements and contracts that meet the needs of all funding streams
- Actively coordinated and upkeep accurate unit inventory
- Distribute financial incentives
- Administer the Risk Mitigation Fund
System-Level Planning: Considerations

Is FMR too low to attract landlords? If yes, capitalize on the “rent reasonableness” waiver for CoC, ESG and ESG-CV funds

What redundancies, time lags, forms, inspection processes, and other bureaucratic steps can you remove or reduce? Consider for mom and pop AND large property managers, make it work for both

Who is best positioned in the system to triage and respond to landlord calls? Decide if it’s RRH providers, dedicated staff at the system-level, or another option, focus on customer service

Have landlords had negative experiences with housing people from homeless programs in the past? Consider a landlord survey to learn more and build in corrections

Can screening requirement reductions get negotiated upfront? Don’t try to do this work on a case-by-case basis

Do you need a unit inventory management database? The answer is yes if you anticipate volume
System-Level Planning: Equity Considerations

Long history and current practices of housing discrimination create disparities among people experiencing homelessness and in housing retention. Connect with local fair housing agency and ensure training for housing navigation and case management staff.

Robust landlord outreach includes ensuring that you’re reaching landlords of color, who may be more likely to be those “mom and pop” landlords who don’t advertise in the usual places and just use things like window signs, church bulletin boards, and word of mouth in the community.

Understand stigma against people experiencing homelessness, especially around substance use and mental illness and mitigate that with landlord education (Also has a racial equity and accessibility impact).

Be aware of the difficulties of finding housing for larger families and the racial equity implications of those urban planning realities and potential discrimination based on family configuration and work to develop a pool of larger units so that families don’t have to wait a long time while engaging the single-family market, which often has higher vacancy rates and larger options.

Recognize the disparate impact on BIPOC of legal tenancy screeners like criminal records, credit scores, eviction history, etc. doing good landlord engagement addresses all those things so when you do it, you’re also doing racial equity!
System-Level Planning: Removing Hurdles

Landlords need the initiative to work for them, taking the time to map out processes will help you find ways to improve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made sure that rental payments will be issued promptly?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Removed all redundant forms or process steps?</td>
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<td>Streamlined housing inspections?</td>
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<td>Established a landlord hotline?</td>
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<td>Established a standard for landlord response times?</td>
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<td>Established a protocol for managing inventory?</td>
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System-Level Planning: Financial Incentives

Each financial incentive and strategy below helps to attract landlords and secure more units for people experiencing homelessness.

Incentives & Strategies

- Establish a Risk Mitigation Fund
- Offer enhanced security deposits
- Offer signing bonuses
- Offer to cover loss of rent due to proration (usually up to 30 days)
- Use Rent Reasonableness Standard if FMR is too low
- Expedite housing inspections to reduce unit vacancy times
System-Level Planning: Risk Mitigation Fund

Risk mitigation funds pay for damages caused by tenants, eviction fees, and rent lost due to eviction and the overall pool of risk mitigation funds does not have to be large

Features

- Claim-based
- Advertise fund to recruit landlords
- Easy to access for landlords
- Landlord access is conditioned on a signed landlord agreement

Four examples:
System-Level Planning: Using ESG-CV + Other Funds

Waivers in the CoC and ESG Programs, as well as other funding sources, offer opportunities, take advantage of them!

Newly-Added Additional Eligible Activities (ESG-CV Notice CPD-21-08)

- **Sponsor-Based Rental Assistance**
  In addition to tenant-based and project-based rental assistance, funds may now be used for sponsor-based rental assistance (see p. 22-23 of the Notice for more information).

- **Renter’s Insurance**
  Funding for renter’s insurance for rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention program participants. Must be necessary to obtain/maintain housing (e.g., landlord requirement). Payment must be made directly to the insurance company on behalf of the program participant.

- **Laundry Services**
  Outreach funds may be used to provide laundry services (e.g., laundry trucks to outdoor locations where people reside).

- **Furniture & Household Furnishings**
  Rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention funds may be used to buy furniture and household furnishings for participant use while they are receiving assistance.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
  Purchase of PPE (e.g., masks, hand sanitizer, etc.) for program participants as an essential service under emergency shelter and street outreach and for program participants receiving homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing.

- **Vaccine Incentives**
  Cash payments of up to $50/dose to people experiencing homelessness as an incentive to receive the coronavirus vaccine.

- **Centralized/Coordinated Assessment**
  Additional costs to update/enhance/operate a coordinated entry system under 24 CFR 576.400(d). Documentation must show the use of funds is limited to an increase in system costs due to coronavirus. Recipient use of funds must be coordinated with the Continuum of Care (CoC).

- **Expanded Use of Cell phones & Internet**
  Costs to provide temporary cell phones for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, receiving rapid rehousing (CoC, YHDP, ESG) receiving ESG homelessness prevention, or residing in permanent supportive housing (CoC or YHDP). Cell phones must be owned by the recipient/subrecipient and leased to participants. Wireless service plans must be the recipient/subrecipient’s.

Landlord Incentives
Funds may be used to pay for landlord incentives for up to 3 times the rent charged for the unit, including signing bonuses, security deposits, repairing damages incurred by the program participant not covered by the security deposit or that are incurred while the program participant is still residing in the unit, and cost of extra cleaning or maintenance.

Fair Market Rent Limit—Waived. Units must still meet rent reasonableness standards.

HUD ESG-CV Notice CPD-21-08 Summary
System-Level Planning: Using ESG-CV + Other Funds

Waivers in the CoC and ESG Programs, as well as other funding sources, offer opportunities, take advantage of them!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Rehousing</th>
<th>Homelessness Diversion</th>
<th>Homelessness Prevention</th>
<th>Eviction Prevention</th>
<th>Rental and Utility Assistance</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Other Financial Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Rental Assistance (1 + 2)</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Coronavirus Relief Funds</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Solutions Grants-CV (CARES Act)</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDBG-CV</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARP – Utility Assistance</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes***</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARP – EHV</td>
<td>Yes**</td>
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<td>ARP – HOME</td>
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<td>ARP – TANF EA</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARP state/local government aid</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</table>

* As part of housing relocation assistance to become lease holder
** For highly vulnerable households that need longer term rental assistance
*** Utility assistance only

Advancing Equity and Impact: Harnessing the American Rescue Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

Stimulus Funding for People Experiencing Homelessness
System-Level Planning: Consistent Message

A clearly written statement on the dedicated organization’s website ensures that the public gets the same information and provides a place for key benefits and contacts for the effort.

Consider the following:

- Brand the initiative – tell people what the goal is
- Clearly state the direct benefits to landlords
- Use pictures that show people thriving in housing
- Provide a single, reliable point of contact, with email and phone #
HOME4GOOD is a new initiative to recruit and retain landlord partners to increase access to market rate housing for people facing homelessness.

HOME4GOOD takes a two-prong approach:

- Recruiting landlords to work with people facing homelessness
- Supporting landlords already participating in

**RECRUITMENT**

Financial incentives are available for landlords who make available 2-3-4+ bedroom units to second chance renters. Benefits include:

- Incentive payments to landlords of $500 for each 2 bedroom unit and $750 for each 3+ bedroom unit
- Additionally, rent and deposit assistance for tenants to increase stability
- Opportunities to directly help the community by renting to veterans, individuals, and families facing homelessness
- Vacancies will be filled quickly because there are always tenant families ready to move in!
- Community Shelter Board's partners continue to work with tenants and serve as a point of contact and support for the landlord

**ONGOING SUPPORT**

A Risk Mitigation Fund is available to reimburse documented property damage, loss of rent, and other related issues. The fund provides an additional safety net for landlords, beyond a normal security deposit, when housing second-chance renters. Loss may include but is not limited to documented physical damage to a property beyond normal wear and tear, lost rent, unpaid utility charges, and, in certain cases, pest extermination.

If you would like to participate as a community partner landlord or get more information about HOME4GOOD, contact Janae Casto • jcasto@csb.org • 614-715-2551
System-Level Planning: Materials

Developing a single set of materials for use across the system ensures that everyone gets the same message, expectations, and access to incentives.

Materials to develop

- Landlord Agreement (outlines expectations of landlord; use as condition of receiving financial incentives)
- Resident Approval Form
- Marketing one-pager
- Orientation packet/ppt for participating landlords
Tell everyone!

- Post ads (Craigslist, newspapers, rent.com, etc.)
- Send brochures to a broad mailing list of rental property owners
- Ask for referrals from other landlords
- Connect with landlords of color and consider the more community-based ways they might “advertise”
Be proactive

- Attend or host landlord events – partner with a landlord association if you can
- Collaborate with local elected officials or agencies, especially in communities of color
- Present at local clubs, religious organizations, etc., across diverse communities
- Present at property management organizations
Market and Recruit: Marketing Materials

Anticipate what landlords will want to see, below is a set of possible materials to include in your arsenal

Marketing Materials

- Agency Annual Reports
- Initiative One-pager
- Client Success Stories
- Business cards
- Testimonials and “Proofs of Concept” (positive media coverage, awards, other landlord statements)
**Market and Recruit: Communication**

**DO** describe why you believe in the initiative

**DON’T** outsource recruitment to clients

**DON’T** focus too much on client benefits, focus on them why it’s good for THEM

**DO** describe the direct financial benefits

**DON’T** delay in following up after initial outreach

**DO** distinguish the initiative from other housing subsidy programs, especially if they have a negative reputation

**DO** emphasize that landlords have someone they can call

**DON’T** be critical of clients, landlords, or the initiative
Tenants receive tenant and financial education

Quick financial payments

In-home services provided once a month

Financial incentives

Tenant-landlord mediation as needed

Other benefits?
Now What? Maintain and Retain

- Wraparound support for landlords
  - Warm check-ins
  - Prompt responses re: issues/violations/questions
  - Neutral mediation

- Cut checks FAST

- Move clients in FAST

- Educate tenants AND landlords

- Wraparound support for tenants’ success
Retention: Support for Move-in Day

Tenants’ success is critical to retaining landlords and meeting your own goals of successfully rehousing people! Make move-in day count with these tips for case workers

- Do a walk-through with the tenant, Be positive!
- Bring a cleaning kit, roll up your sleeves WITH your client
- Arrange for furniture and basic supplies to be delivered
- Provide an orientation to the building and community; encourage meeting neighbors
- Make sure locks and keys work, review fire safety plans, and safe appliance use. Discuss strategies for lost keys, etc.
Retention: Tenants are Protected

Landlords have a responsibility to not discriminate against or sexually harass clients, make sure staff and clients know their rights and how to file a complaint

HUD’s Office of Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity enforces federal civil rights laws:

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/online-complaint

Call 1-800-669-9777

Department of Justice enforces federal sexual harassment prohibitions

Thank you for listening