

Opening Doors – Connecticut

Framework for Preventing and Ending Homelessness

Landlord Brainstorming Meeting

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, June 8, 2016

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

The group discussed barriers to accessing landlords and increasing housing stock for people experiencing homelessness. There were four themes that emerged: Accessibility/Affordability, Economics/Funding, Perception, and Process/Policies.

Accessibility/Affordability:

Low vacancy rates
Lack of housing stock and age of stock
Undesirable Neighborhoods
Lack of Transpiration
Absentee Landlords (only Prop. Mngr)

Process/Policies:

Inspections (HUD/DOH), and age of stock
Lease Requirements (Landlords)
Family Size to Unit Size ratio (HUD)
Criminal History

Perception:

Criminal History
Stereotypes
Prejudices
Burned Landlords
Landlord double security/rent

Economic/Funding:

No income and need H/HW included
FMR
Security Deposit
Evictions
Credit History
Application Fees

The group identified what is working to maintain landlords:

- Establishing personal relationships with landlords
- Integrating Case Management services with tenants
- Payment plan for client and landlord
- Release of Information with Landlord
- Three strike rule
- Reviewing the lease with the tenant
- Agency fronts the money to the Landlord and then gets reimbursed by the tenant
- HAP contract (education)
- Agency vouches to the Landlord that s/he will get paid
- Both tenant and Landlord review expectations and responsibilities
- Agency acts as Representative Payee
- Case Manager creates routine with tenant to pay bills (supports tenant independence)
- Identify talented staff within agencies to engage landlords and support staff development
- City has Fair Housing Coordinator and housing inspection

Potential or Current Resources:

- HPRF program pays to fix code violations (must rent to RRH folks) Can we include PSH?
- Liberty Bank Foundation—funds to pay landlords if tenants damage unit

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- CT Fair Housing Erin Kemple is providing a free training in Bristol. Can she provide elsewhere to educate landlords?
- Utilize city fair housing coordinators.
- Training Case Managers to do housing inspections?

The group discussed ideas to identify and engage landlords:

- Develop community based taskforces to identify and recruit landlords (elected officials, members of faith communities, current landlords, etc)
- Landlord breakfast
- Review eviction notification list from Marshals
- Utilize HUD list of landlords
- Work with cities to get lists and contacts of landlords
- Develop relationships with code inspectors
- Develop relationships with landlords (reciprocity---provide tenants to them to fill vacancies)
- Hold events that promote issue (sleep out), and present emotional side to engage community
- Provide data to dispel myths
- Find model tenant who can be an ambassador
- Highlight success stories and share with landlords
- Engage real estate agents
- Engage the interfaith community
- Utilize canvassing approach to meet and engage landlords

Next Steps:

- Identify best landlords and reach out to them to find other good landlords
- Create list of all known landlords
- Craft standards messaging that can enable communities to input community specific messaging
- Create template letters to landlords and community members
- Think about how to engage/get by-in from inspectors
- Promote issue on local media (my community access, public access television and local radio such as college stations, etc)
- Outline clear ask of communities and then present to local communities, interfaith groups, and other identified groups
- Identify leaders within the CANs to work with landlords and provide TA to build staff skills
- Pull together data in order to create information sheet which can address concerns or dispel myths
- Brainstorm backend structure of landlord engagement process