

THE LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT:

A Guide to Working with Landlords in
Housing First Programs



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“The making of this toolkit has been a collective effort. We would like to begin by acknowledging the hard work done by the authors, Dr. Jennifer Rae and Dr. Tim Aubry, who invested considerable time and effort into completing this toolkit. Dr. Rae is a recent PhD graduate from the School of Psychology and a Researcher at the Centre for Research on Education and Community Services at the University of Ottawa. Dr. Aubry is a Full Professor in the School of Psychology and a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services at the University of Ottawa. We thank them not only for their efforts, but also for the breadth of knowledge and expertise that they were able to share while the toolkit was being created.”

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HOW THIS TOOLKIT WAS MADE

This toolkit was developed in collaboration with a diverse group of stakeholders from communities across Canada.

Over 60 individuals from 24 different organizations were consulted by phone and in person. We heard from:

- Case managers in Housing First programs
- Housing specialists
- Housing First program managers
- Community entity representatives
- Municipal staff working on the issue of homelessness
- Landlords and property managers
- Tenants
- Other experts who have knowledge of Housing First, including Housing First with Indigenous populations.

Site visits were conducted in five Canadian communities:

- St. John's, Newfoundland
- Ottawa, Ontario
- Kingston, Ontario
- Lethbridge, Alberta
- Victoria, British Columbia

The toolkit contains the experiences, recommendations and advice that were shared during consultations and site visits, as well as findings from existing research and reports.



Direct excerpts from consultations in these five communities are presented in green boxes. The source is also mentioned at the end of the excerpt.



Copies of program materials that were generously shared by Housing First programs in these five communities are referred to in purple boxes and are presented in full in the Appendix section. These materials, or tools, can be used as examples for other Housing First programs.



Indigenous-specific content is identified in grey boxes.



Key questions to consider are identified in blue boxes. They help clarify the context of what is gathered and/or presented.

WHO THIS TOOLKIT IS FOR

This toolkit is meant to be a practical “how to” guide to working with landlords in the context of a Housing First program. It will help program providers build effective, lasting relationships with landlords.

Although many aspects of the toolkit will apply to a wide range of programs, the toolkit will focus on programs that offer participants a rent supplement in scattered site housing in the private rental market.

This toolkit presents a set of ideas, approaches and resources that program providers may choose from and adapt to their own practice.



This toolkit also outlines important considerations that Housing First program providers should be mindful of when providing services to Indigenous people. Indigenous people in Canada are ten times more likely than non-Indigenous people to become homeless.¹ All Housing First program providers should be aware of the barriers facing Indigenous homeless populations, including racism and prejudice, and should make sure culturally responsive services are provided in all areas of service delivery, including landlord engagement. It is also important to recognize that the unique First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities face distinct challenges and may require different support and services to meet their specific needs.

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at canada.ca/publicentre-ESDC. It is also available upon request in multiple formats (large print, Braille, audio CD, e-text CD, or DAISY), by contacting 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232). By teletypewriter (TTY), call 1-800-926-9105.

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INTRODUCTION

RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF LANDLORDS IN HOUSING FIRST

The success of Housing First programs depends on the availability of high-quality housing options for program participants to live in over a long-term period. Scattered-site, independent housing is a cornerstone of the Housing First model. Private market landlords are critical to providing this kind of housing and are considered an “essential partner” in Housing First. One of the key tasks of Housing First programs is to build and maintain productive relationships with landlords who are willing to rent to program participants.

Important features of the Housing First approach—such as separation of housing and clinical services, community integration and participant choice—largely depend on access to private market housing. Positive relationships with landlords can support the well-being of program participants, facilitate recovery and contribute to successful tenancies. Living in private market housing and interacting with landlords is one way to promote the personal agency and citizenship rights of program participants.

BELIEVE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE!

Building and maintaining relationships with landlords can seem daunting for Housing First program providers. Many challenges need to be overcome. Housing First programs often operate in communities that have a tight rental market with a low vacancy rate and a lack of affordable housing options. Securing stable funding and adequate resources is an ongoing challenge. Housing First programs frequently encounter attitudes of discrimination and stigma toward the people they serve.



The issue of racism against Indigenous people in the private rental housing market remains a very real barrier that Housing First programs must also confront.

Despite these challenges, there are success stories. Across Canada, in communities large and small, Housing First program providers are finding innovative and creative ways to engage with landlords and find good quality housing options for participants. It can be helpful and encouraging to remember that all programs encounter difficulties, but that it is possible, with patience and perseverance, to effectively partner with landlords.

“

When we first started out, we were a brand new team. And that was in 2009... After a couple of years, as you get more well-known in the community and you build good relationships with landlords – I mean, we’ve been able to do that. We use the same landlords frequently. If they have a vacancy coming up now, I don’t have to call them. They call us!

(Excerpt from a consultation with Stella’s Circle in St. John’s, NL)

”

“

After 15 years, we are now at a place where we are supporting close to 250 people experiencing significant barriers to stable housing – mental illness, substance use, etc. – in private-market settings receiving a rental subsidy with a mobile case management support network and a dedicated landlord liaison worker and we are doing that with an effective 0% vacancy rate. We are working with over 70 landlords and have a retention rate of close to 100%.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Pacifica Housing in Victoria, BC)

”

“

Our program is 6 years in now... Now we are looking at over 120 landlords...We have this huge base of landlords that’s been around for a long time...Our first landlord, they are a really large landlord in the city, and we got a unit over in a large building. The actual first rent supplement tenant is still living there... Now, we are lucky enough that we have enough landlords that we work with, and I think we have a good enough reputation through the landlords, and we have been able to put really hard-to-serve clients in.

(Excerpt from a consultation with CMHA Ottawa in Ottawa, ON)

”

LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER

Housing First program providers can come together to share information and resources and to learn from one another’s work.

The interactive [Community Workspace on Homelessness²](#) provides a forum for members of the community to connect. The Workspace’s *Ask Me Anything!* series includes a session with a housing coordinator who answered questions about landlord engagement.

Some communities have developed grassroots networks for housing coordinators to come together to discuss the challenges and successes they experience in their day-to-day work. One example is the [Housing Locator Network](#) in Ottawa.³ Members share resources through email and regularly connect via teleconference.

2 The Community Workspace on Homelessness, website: <https://workspaceonhomelessness.ca>.

3 The Housing Locator Network, <mailto:LPP@ottawaboothcentre.org>.

STAGE ONE: LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT



Landlord engagement means finding, recruiting, working with and retaining landlords. Landlord engagement requires careful planning and preparation, which takes time.

Housing First program providers should start to develop a landlord engagement strategy before even recruiting participants into the program. Start the process early on, and be patient. Consider the process a long-term investment that will take time to pay off.

UNDERSTAND THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Begin by gathering information about the local context in which the program will be operating. Consider the unique local assets and opportunities that may benefit the program, and reflect on the challenges and barriers that may need to be overcome.



Direct excerpts from the consultations



Copies of program materials



Indigenous content



Key questions



KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is the housing market like in our community?
 - Affordable housing stock
 - Vacancy rate
 - Degree of rental market regulation
- What are some key features of local legislation regarding landlord-tenant issues?
- In which neighbourhoods or areas of the community should we focus our landlord engagement efforts?
 - Affordability
 - Proximity to amenities
 - Access to public transportation
- 💡 **TIP:** Consider contacting your community's transportation organization to advocate for additional routes in a given neighbourhood.
- What resources are already available in the community that could support our efforts?
- Who else in the community may be offering a similar program to ours?
- Who are the community champions that we could reach out to?
- What existing networks or associations are in place?
- What proportion of the local homeless population identify as being First Nations, Métis or Inuit?
- What are the assets and accomplishments of the local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities?
- What are the unique needs of the local First Nations, Métis and Inuit homeless populations?
 - Challenges may include physical health problems (including higher rates of diabetes and HIV/AIDS), criminal justice system involvement and intergenerational trauma. The Indigenous homeless population may include large numbers of youth, single mothers and seniors.

REACH OUT TO OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY

When resources are limited, it helps to find creative ways to work with others and access existing resources and information in the community. Meet with as many local agencies as possible to tell them about the Housing First program and to discuss potential opportunities to work together.

Develop strong working relationships and partnerships with key agencies. Draw up clear protocols together that outline the respective roles each partner will play. Hold regular meetings on an ongoing basis to discuss issues as they arise.

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PARTNERS, RESOURCES, AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Agency or Organization	Purpose
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	Learn about the local housing market.
Provincial housing corporations	Learn about the needs and concerns of local landlords.
Chamber of Commerce	
Landlord and property management associations	Identify and recruit local landlords.
Real estate agents	
Community Legal Clinics	Receive education and advice about landlord tenant issues and the Residential Tenancies Act. Receive representation at the Landlord and Tenant Board.
	 TIP: If your community has a law school, find out about partnering to offer practical experience to upper-year students.

Agency or Organization	Purpose
Income assistance (e.g., social assistance, welfare, disability)	Understand policies and procedures. Identify a contact person by name and arrange a direct line of communication, such as a direct extension phone number. Arrange for benefit claims to be fast tracked where possible. Facilitate direct payment of rent to landlords. Discuss additional funds that may be available to cover moving expenses, storage unit rentals, start-up allowance, damages or arrears. Address any barriers to assistance that members of First Nations communities may face if they have recently relocated to an urban area after living on reserve.
Municipal housing inspectors	Receive training on property standards laws. Receive advice on what to look for when conducting a property inspection. Receive help to review damage estimates.
Management bodies for social housing	Learn how to address common issues in landlord-tenant relations, such as guest management.
Other agencies in the homelessness sector, including shelters	Receive education and advice on the local context, and tips on how to work within the local system. Receive leads on potential landlords that have pre-existing relationships with homelessness agencies. Exchange program information. Facilitate referrals and transfers between agencies.
Regional health authority	Exchange program information. Facilitate referrals and transfers between agencies.
Community mental health teams	
Hospital inpatient units	💡 TIP: Consider arranging for an occupational therapist to assess a participant. The participant may qualify for home care or additional support through the local health department. Support workers may be available to administer medication or transport a participant to appointments.

Agency or Organization	Purpose
Vulnerable Sector Unit of the Police Service	Exchange information about the program. If police need to be contacted about an issue with a program participant, make sure that officers trained in mental health will arrive to offer support. ⁴
Probation programs	Access a pool of individuals participating in a Community Service Order Program, who are completing community service hours and may be available to help with tasks such as cleaning, moving, or junk removal.
Social enterprises and local companies	Develop agreements with companies that may offer relevant services such as pest removal, cleaning, moving, and repair work.
Utilities companies	Arrange for participants to get on a 12-month equal payment plan that can be paid directly from income assistance benefits.
Local agencies serving Indigenous people	Learn about the unique needs of Indigenous communities. Receive education and training for staff. Facilitate referrals and transfers between agencies. Work together to make sure Indigenous participants have access to culturally responsive services.

⁴ From a consultation with AMHS, 2017 – Kingston, ON



**The Importance of a Strong Working Relationship with Income Assistance
Lethbridge, AB**

We are very fortunate to have a fantastic relationship with Alberta Works. Their office has fought to have a Housing First-specific worker, someone with more of a front-line mentality. This worker takes the time to talk, tends to show a little extra compassion, gives the benefit of the doubt, and is more open to helping with those extra funds to send someone to treatment or receive a bus pass. Community partnerships are very achievable; all it takes is a commitment to strengthening that connection.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Woods Homes in Lethbridge, AB)



SET UP A COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Bring stakeholders together to form a community advisory committee or working group.

Participating in a committee or working group can strengthen ties among key players in the sector and generate important conversations. The committee or group will meet regularly to discuss landlord recruitment strategies, plan events and initiatives, and raise awareness of local issues.



Make sure members of the local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities are represented on the community advisory committee. Consider developing a dedicated subcommittee, such as an Indigenous cultural lens committee, to make sure all aspects of the program take into account Indigenous perspectives.



**The Rental Team
St. John's, NL**

Role: To engage landlords, tenants, community and industry to address issues that impact the quality, availability and affordability of rental housing in St. John's.

Organization: Accountable to the City of St. John's Affordable Housing Working Group

Composition: City of St. John's, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, Eastern Health, Navigators & Networks (NAVNET), End Homelessness St. John's, Stella's Circle, Choices for Youth, Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation, Newfoundland & Labrador Housing Corporation, Canadian Mental Health Association, New Hope Community Centre, The Wiseman Centre, Empower: The Disability Resource Centre and The AIDS Committee of Newfoundland & Labrador

(Excerpt from the Terms of Reference for the Rental Team in St. John's, NL)



COORDINATE WITH OTHER HOUSING FIRST PROVIDERS

Landlords may find it confusing to work with multiple Housing First programs at the same time. A coordinated approach to landlord engagement can be beneficial, especially in larger communities that have multiple Housing First programs.

When agencies work together, they are able to combine and maximize resources, and eliminate redundancies. Developing a streamlined, community-wide approach can increase efficiency and improve the level of service provided to landlords. When agencies coordinate with one another, they are able to provide landlords with consistent, professional and sustainable service.

A coordinated approach may involve:

- One or more Housing Coordinator staff positions shared among multiple Housing First programs
- Standardized levels of service across multiple programs
- Community-wide training and capacity-building events
- Regular inter-agency meetings to discuss local issues and challenging cases
- A shared mitigation fund
- A coordinated assessment process



The Landlord Liaison Pilot Project Victoria, BC

Everyone who is doing this type of work needs to come to the table as a community. Collaboration is critical. Pooling resources, pooling knowledge, and creating a basic standard of service quality are what are going to make a difference.

Our community-wide landlord program is two years old now. We started by saying, where are all the subsidies in town? Who is doing something that looks like supporting people with some level of need in the community with a subsidy and supports?

Some agencies out there were going like, “Help! How do we do this?” Some places had subsidies that they had to give back at the end of the year because they couldn’t even put them in place because they couldn’t find housing.

The Capital Regional District, the Coalition to End Homelessness, and the Health Department came together to fund a pilot project for five different agencies to have a shared, full-time Landlord Liaison Worker. The Coalition provided leadership and conducted a community mapping process.

Collaboration involves educating different agencies who bring different capacities to the table and are working with different types of clients. How do we use the model that we know that works well, while also adapting it to work with your agency?

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Service quality and consistency can be a big issue. You don't want to lose your sense of control. We have to think, "How do we work with different levels of support, and how can we make that work for the landlord, so they know what they are buying. How do you guarantee that the workers are going to do things a certain way?"

This is where trust comes in and building something together. More experienced agencies take on a leadership role. There is a huge role modelling piece: telling people what has worked at your agency, what your approach is, and building their capacity. But don't be condescending. Just say, "These are our best practices, this is where our success has come from." Show other agencies just how much it takes to get someone stably housed.

Get everyone together, sit down, and talk about best practices. There needs to be a worker at each agency who is engaged, who has been to training sessions, who is familiar with the model.

Continually hold several mandatory ongoing meetings, once per month, or weekly with some agencies. At these meetings, bring all of the people on the ground together to discuss all of the clients facing issues. Talk about case management, support one another, develop best practices, explore what's worked and what hasn't, identify where we need to build or where can we partner, where can we remove redundancy and be collaborative, what you can add and what I can add. Have more seasoned workers give advice. Share the onus and the outcome. With these meetings, when people have problems, they have someplace to go.

Doing things in a more centralized, formal way, and allowing everyone to access it on more of a community, collaborative level, has been way more effective. We are able to match our clients in a way that is more suited to the buildings. It's not just like, "I have my client, and I have this building." It's like, "Well, I know this building, I will introduce you to my landlord liaison and make a connection there, and then that building can be matched up to a person more effectively." And then everyone feels that they are being treated fairly. The nepotism level goes way down.

It's important that we don't silo and that we're not competing with other agencies for landlords or anything else. When we're collaborating we're not competing. We can work together for the greater good.

Start small and work at a pace that's sustainable and build capacity along the way. Be consistent and accountable. Celebrate your victories.

(Excerpts from consultations with Pacifica Housing and the Coalition to End Homelessness, 2017- Victoria BC)



WHO ELSE CAN PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT?

Housing First program providers should not be alone in developing a landlord engagement strategy. The municipal (or regional) government body is uniquely placed to play an important supporting role. Other community organizations, such as a local community advisory board, community entity, coalition to end homelessness, or Aboriginal coalition to end homelessness, can also contribute in important ways.

Communities need a backbone organization that adopts an asset-based community development approach to “lead from the side” and make sure that everyone comes together to determine the best ways to move forward on common issues.⁵

The city and/or community agencies can help with landlord engagement by:

- (city-specific) Offering incentives such as property tax breaks, lower processing fees, and fast tracking of housing proposals to landlords and property developers who agree to rent units to Housing First programs.
- (city-specific) Making sure property standards are met and safe, high-quality housing is maintained city wide; regularly inspecting rooming houses; and actively targeting “slumlords.”
- (city-specific) Making sure elected officials know about the program and can deliver a consistent message at the many community events they attend, lending their credibility to the cause.

TIPS

- Ask an elected official to chair or sit on a board for the program.
- Ask elected officials to help bring important stakeholders to the table, such as the head of the local landlord association.
- Put the city’s logo on the program’s letterhead. This lends legitimacy to the program and can appeal to landlords.

- Contributing to a damage mitigation fund.
- Serving as a system planner; developing a service map that tracks a typical user all the way through the system to identify any gaps, inefficiencies or tensions in the system, as well as assets and strengths; and producing a landscape map or model.
- Developing proposals to apply for additional funding.
- Conducting research and identifying best practices used in other communities.
- Providing database support.
- Building community capacity by offering training and workshops to staff in the sector (including training that is specific to providing culturally responsive support to Indigenous people).

⁵ From a consultation with the Coalition to End Homelessness, 2017 – Victoria, BC

- Conducting needs assessments (including needs assessments of the local Indigenous homeless population), success measurement, program evaluation and fidelity assessments.
- Helping facilitate events for landlords, such as forums or information events.
- Hosting media events to promote the program and raise awareness.
- Offering recognition to landlords who participate in the program; and creating an annual award and presenting it to an excellent landlord.
- Providing public endorsement of the program.

CONDUCT A LANDLORD SURVEY

Identify strengths, challenges and opportunities by asking landlords in the community to participate in a survey. Gathering more information about what local landlords need and want will help to develop a targeted landlord engagement strategy.



Topics to Cover in a Landlord Survey

- The types of properties that exist in the market
- The locations of available properties
- How many landlords are small, medium or large
- The common issues that landlords face
- The level of knowledge that landlords have about the participant population (Including the barriers faced by the Indigenous homeless population)
- What incentives could motivate landlords
- What information or resources landlords may want
- Concerns that landlords may have about renting to the participant population (Including potential racist or prejudicial beliefs)



Landlord Survey

St. John's, NL

Who was Involved

- The survey was coordinated by the City of St. John's in collaboration with the Rental Team (of the Affordable Housing Working Group)
- The City's Engagement and Communications Departments provided assistance
- The Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency performed data analysis

How the Survey was Advertised

- The survey was available through the City of St. John's *Engage* webpage
- A weblink to the survey was shared regularly on social media
- A public service announcement was developed
- An email was forwarded via the Rental Team to local landlords
- Four promotional videos were created featuring the Deputy Mayor, tenants, and a landlord

Features of the Survey

- The online survey was developed using (free) *Survey Monkey* software
- The link to the survey was live for one month in the fall of 2016
- The survey was brief, requiring only 5-10 minutes to complete
- The survey was anonymous
- Participants received an incentive – any landlord or property manager who completed the survey and signed up to receive the newsletter was eligible to win a \$500 gift card to the home improvement store of their choice
- The survey corresponded with the introduction of the electronic landlord newsletter *New Lease* – survey respondents also signed up to receive the newsletter

Sample Questions

- What kind of rental properties do you have?
- Are there any particular types of individuals that you are less likely to rent to? Are there specific reasons why?
- Rank the issues below according to how common they have been in your experience:
 - Nonpayment of rent
 - Issues related to tenant behavior
 - Damage
 - Difficulty receiving payment from government agencies

Results

- There were 300 respondents to the survey
- 160 respondents signed up for the newsletter
- The newsletter was then used to send out additional information about upcoming engagement events
- Survey results were used to inform future work and used as a stepping stone toward future engagement events

Learn More: <http://www.engagestjohns.ca/landlord-survey>





See Appendix A for a copy of the landlord survey conducted by the City of St. John's, NL, in 2016.

SECURE THE NECESSARY FINANCIAL PIECES

Money matters. Guaranteed rent, flexible dollars, a mitigation fund and insurance are all important components of a landlord engagement strategy.

Guaranteed rent

Payment of rent is considered one of the most important factors affecting a tenancy in the private market. Housing First programs must ensure that landlords receive rent in full and on time. Landlords prefer programs that pay rent directly to them rather than going through the tenant.

In Canadian Housing First programs, rent is typically paid through two different sources:

1. The rent supplement provided by the program; and
2. A third party rent payment, often through income assistance programs provided by the provincial ministry, OR directly from the participant's income if the participant is employed.

In the planning and preparation phase, make sure a sufficient rent supplement is available to support participants in private market housing. The rent supplement must be large

enough to allow participants to rent good quality units in neighbourhoods across the community without dipping into the basic needs or support allowance portion of their income assistance. A common standard for Housing First programs is to provide a rent subsidy so that individuals use only 30% of their income for housing costs.

Once you have secured a sufficient rent supplement, focus on the income assistance portion of the rent (if applicable). Avoid late rent payments and rent arrears problems by working closely with the local income assistance office to facilitate rent-direct payments. Establish a working agreement and communicate regularly with income assistance workers to make sure all payments will be reliable and on time.

Determine how the Housing First program will cover additional rent-related costs, such as any necessary rent deposits (e.g., first and last month's rent, damage deposit) and utilities payments. Rent deposits must be available quickly to be submitted with a rent application if required. If income assistance will be used to cover rent deposits, work with the local income assistance office to streamline the process.

In situations where tenants choose to pay their rent themselves, some Housing First programs ask tenants to sign a cheque over to the program for management. This may apply to situations where the tenant is receiving assistance that cannot be paid directly (e.g., CPP) or is employed.

Automate as much of the rent payment system as possible, to save time and effort. This will be especially critical as the program continues to grow.



**Payment Strategies used by the Canadian Mental Health Association
Ottawa, ON**

We have a Change Log, which is an Excel file that we populate for every month coming up. In and around the 15th of the month we start really looking at that to see where there are rent increases, move outs, etc. Around the 20th of the month, that information starts getting inputted into our database.

From the database, the cheques get produced. One of us will kind of expedite it and make sure that the database is matching the Change Log and everything is working well with that. Payment sheets are printed off, which go to each landlord with the associated cheques to cover CMHA's portion of the rent.

We also guarantee the landlord that if the cheques are coming late, or for some reason there have been some holidays or glitch, that we will literally go out and hand-deliver every cheque to the landlord to make sure that they get there on time for them.

I will write a letter with a breakdown: this is the landlord's address, this is a breakdown of the rent, this is your portion to pay. And then social assistance starts paying that directly.

The other thing that we also do to help out the tenants in regards to those payments is with hydro. Now, it would be a logistic nightmare for the finance department to be writing hydro cheques out. So, what we do, let's just say hydro is \$50 a month on average for a place. The shelter allowance from social assistance is \$479. We will have social assistance pay \$429 to the landlord, and we will bump up our rent supplement by \$50, and then we will ask social assistance to pay Hydro directly to the landlord for that other \$50.

(Excerpt from a consultation with CMHA Ottawa in Ottawa, ON)



Flexible dollars

Keep flexible money available at all times to cover miscellaneous expenses as they arise. Set money aside so that the program can be creative and responsive in addressing the needs of tenants and landlords.

Some of the costs that a Housing First program may have to cover (often on short notice) include:

- Rent deposits (e.g., first and last months' rent, damage deposit)
- Rent payments if a participant is hospitalized, jailed, in treatment or in financial crisis
- Rent or utility payment arrears
- Moving expenses
- Basic necessities and furnishings
- Education and training
- Taking a landlord out for coffee or lunch
- Small appreciation gifts for landlords
- Catering costs for forums and other events with landlords
- Bedbug or pest removal
- Professional cleaning and/or junk removal
- Replacing lost keys

Mitigation fund

Landlords may be more willing to rent to program participants if they know that a mitigation fund is in place to offset some of the risks. Landlords may even reduce or waive the damage deposit for programs that have a mitigation fund.

A mitigation fund can play a critical role in upholding a program's reputation and maintaining a landlord relationship over time. Even a landlord who has a bad experience with a tenant may be willing to continue to rent to the program if a mitigation fund can help cover some costs.

A mitigation fund can be used to cover:

- Damages to a unit caused by a program participant
- Short-term vacancy reimbursement when a program participant breaks their lease
- Unpaid rent
- Legal fees or mediation costs

“

**Damage Mitigation Fund
Kingston, ON**

Anybody who receives a rent supplement is eligible under the damage protocol, which has been in place since our Housing First program started. It has been one of the selling features of the program.

Originally, the money was housed with the City. The City held the money and decided whether or not to pay it out. The Housing Liaison Worker was the middle person between the landlord and the City. The Housing Liaison Worker would go out to hear the complaint from the landlord. He would document it, photograph it, get the invoice, and submit it to the City.

But there were issues going back and forth and negotiating costs with the landlords and the City. We heard feedback from landlords who said they were frustrated by the damage claim system, that it was taking too long and was too much of a hassle for them.

So we brought the money in house to our agency, and now we hold the money. With damage claims up to \$500, the Housing Liaison Worker has the authority to settle directly with the landlord. With claims over \$500, he will investigate and get a third party to corroborate his assessment, the amount of the claim to be paid out will be determined based on that assessment. The city audits the files to make sure everything looks reasonable.

There are clear policies in place with the landlords, the City, and our agency. It's important to have written procedures with landlords to articulate the policies. The policy states that there needs to be verification before any repairs are done, so it's important to tell landlords that they can't go ahead and fix the damage themselves and then submit a claim after the fact.

The fund is \$30,000 per year that is available to be claimed, or \$7,500 per quarter. Surprisingly, I think the number of claims have gone down, and it does not get used to its full extent.

Another thing we have recently implemented is where the damages are extensive and the cost is excessive, we will pay the landlord's insurance deductible so they can put in an insurance claim but not be out of pocket.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Home Base Housing in Kingston, ON)

”



See Appendix B for an excerpt from the rent supplement agreement with landlords used in Kingston, ON, which includes details about the damage mitigation fund.

Insurance

Some Housing First programs find that obtaining insurance can further offset risks to the landlord, tenant and program itself. Landlords report that insurance can be an incentive that helps convince them to rent to program participants.

A Housing First program may consider obtaining:

- Bulk third party insurance in case of property damage
- Tenant's insurance

TIPS

Tenant's insurance protects against loss or damage to personal property caused by fire, theft or water damage. It also covers liability for accidental injury or damage caused by negligence.



Seek out a socially conscious home insurer that has programs for renters in social housing, such as Housing Services Corporation or SOHO Tenant Insurance.

SELECT A LEASE ARRANGEMENT

There are several possible lease arrangements that can be used in a Housing First program. Some arrangements may be more desirable than others, depending on the unique community context and the population of program participants being served.

Regardless of the arrangement, leases or subleases must give the full legal rights of tenancy to program participants. All the terms in leases or subleases must apply to people who have lived experience of mental illness and homelessness.

Standard lease

In the Housing First model, the preferred approach is to have a tenant to sign a standard lease directly with the landlord. This approach is considered more desirable in terms of tenant rights and empowerment, ensuring that the tenant has legal control over their living space, and protecting tenants against illegal eviction. This approach may also be more desirable for the program because it limits the program's legal liability for the unit.

However, a standard lease may be considered less favourable by some landlords, who may be concerned about the housing readiness of program participants and the risks associated with renting to them as tenants.

Master or head lease

In the case of a head lease, the Housing First program holds legal title to a rental unit and subleases to program participants as tenants. Head lease arrangements are often preferred by landlords.

For the Housing First program, a head lease may have the following advantages:

- Retention of a set number of units
- Efficient housing search and leasing process
- Expedited move-in process
- The right to enter a unit in an emergency
- The right to ask tenants to voluntarily move between units when problems arise
- Simplified administration and paperwork
- Improved standards of unit condition and safety

However, head leases may be problematic in terms of tenant rights. They may result in less separation of housing and clinical services and less opportunity for participant choice. The housing team may take on the role of a surrogate landlord that closely monitors tenant behaviour. Head leases may compromise the tenant's self-determination, independence and sense of personal responsibility for the unit.

Holding agreement

A holding agreement with a landlord is a method of reserving a rental unit exclusively for the use of the program while still maintaining a standard lease agreement between the landlord and the tenant. This arrangement can benefit both the landlord and the Housing First program.

A holding agreement guarantees consistent rent to the landlord with no gaps between tenants and no need to advertise or show the unit. The Housing First program gains consistent access to a unit while maintaining important boundaries between housing and clinical services.

TIPS

In head lease arrangements, the Housing First program must obtain adequate insurance coverage.

 Housing First agencies that serve youth have found that head lease arrangements are a strong tool. Convertible leases also work well, especially for programs serving youth under the age of 18. With a convertible lease, the Housing First agency holds the lease in its own name at first, but the youth takes over when they are older and able to sign the legal agreement.

ESTABLISH OPERATIONAL POLICIES, PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

Establishing clear, written policies, protocols and procedures can ensure that a Housing First program operates in a consistent, fair, transparent and efficient manner. Make sure that protocols and procedures are accessible to all applicable stakeholders, including tenants, landlords, and housing and clinical team members.

Areas of program operations that warrant formal protocols, policies and procedures include:

- Moves
- Evictions
- Damages
- Inspections – including prior to move-in, and throughout tenancy
- Complaints
- Confidentiality, consent and release of information
- Team roles and responsibilities – including frequency of home visits
- Meeting schedules – internal and external
- Graduation and discharge from the program

HIRE AND TRAIN STAFF

Separate the housing and clinical roles

The housing and clinical roles should be highly coordinated, but separate. This separation promotes trust with the landlord, and reduces ‘us versus them’ thinking. The dedicated Housing Coordinator focuses on liaising with the landlord and responding to landlord concerns, while the clinical service provider is free to focus on supporting the client. Separating the two roles may require either training existing staff to take on new responsibilities, or hiring new staff.

Although separate, the housing and clinical teams must work closely together and communicate frequently. They must share information so that everyone is in the loop and can intervene early when problems arise. Both teams should be consistent in their messaging and communication with landlords and tenants. In the planning and preparation phase, outline a regular meeting schedule, information-sharing agreement and communication protocol for the two teams.



TIPS

Making sure units meet property standards and are in good condition is important for tenant health and well-being, and increases the chance that tenants will take good care of their home and pay their rent in full. Unit inspections show landlords that the program is serious and professional and has good values, which also improves the program’s reputation in the community.⁶ Move-in inspections, with photos or even room-by-room videos, can ensure that damage deposits are returned and the program is not charged for pre-existing damages. Unit inspection checklists and tools can help program providers and participants make informed renting decisions. [Consult the Observer-Rated Housing Quality Scale](#) or the checklist used by the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) for ideas.



Different Housing First programs use different terms to refer to the housing coordinator role, such as Housing Specialist, Landlord Liaison or Housing Locator, but the meaning is generally the same.

⁶ From a consultation with Front Step, 2017 – St. John’s, NL

Housing Coordinators have the following essential qualities:

- Maintain professionalism – don't take things personally
- Are confident – not afraid of rejection
- Are open to tough conversations
- Are persistent
- Show initiative – make things happen rather than waiting for them to happen

- Maintain a positive attitude – expect success
- Demonstrate integrity and honesty
- Lead by example – demonstrate appropriate behaviour and language for tenants, landlords and the community
- Understand the mindset of a business owner

Housing Coordinator Role	Clinical Team Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach and marketing • Identify available units – maintain a database • Serve as primary point of contact for landlord • Act as a go-between with the landlord, clinical team, and participant • Address issues related to maintenance, health and safety, housing quality concerns, rent payment • Inspect units • Assess damages and arrange for repairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accompany the participant to view the apartment • Help to match the participant to the right unit – ensure good fit • Explain the lease to participants • Ensure the apartment is furnished • Develop a monthly budget with the participant • Educate the participant on his or her rights and responsibilities as a tenant • Advocate for participant • Problem solve in situations where tenancy is threatened • Provide regular home visits



See Appendix C for a Housing Coordinator job description developed by Pacifica Housing in Victoria, BC.



Establishing a Dedicated Housing Coordinator Role Victoria, BC

It's not enough to just have a part time job where you might go out and find a unit or two. It needs to be a robust, full-time position.

What led to the realization that we needed a full-time Landlord Liaison Worker was that when landlord engagement was the responsibility of case managers and outreach workers, they were burning out trying to manage both relationships. It was comprising their integrity in a therapeutic alliance with the client. It was setting up an unhealthy environment regarding morale because it was competitive. Even in the same office within the same program, it was, well, 'that's my landlord.'

So, we created a fair and transparent housing process internally, and now we are really looking to push that out into the community and move this to the community level. It has helped with the workload, and maintaining the therapeutic alliance with the tenant. Allow the case worker to work with the client, and the landlord liaison to work with the landlord, and have that bridge and separation.

(Excerpts from a consultation with Pacifica Housing in Victoria, BC)



Hire Indigenous Staff Members

Keep in mind the importance of hiring Indigenous staff members, whether in unique roles specifically supporting Indigenous identity development, or in established positions such as case manager or housing coordinator.

FORMAL TRAINING FOR PROGRAM STAFF

Support program staff with formal training and education opportunities on how to engage with landlords and promote successful tenancies. Training can be delivered through in-house sessions, workshops or conferences, and webinars or other online methods.

Consider the following training topics:

- Motivational interviewing
- Assertive engagement
- Negotiation skills
- Practical housing issues
- Housing-related human rights
- The Residential Tenancies Act
- Eviction prevention strategies
- Dealing with bedbugs and pests
- Hoarding

**TIP**

The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness offers a [Training and Technical Assistance program](#) with complementary training for all Homelessness Partnering Strategy communities that have a Housing First target.



Web Workshop with an Expert St. John's, NL



TIP: Consult with other experienced programs and communities.

The Rental Team for the City of St. John's hosted an afternoon web workshop with an expert from Boulder, Colorado on the topic of "Strategies in Engaging Landlords". This workshop was open to all local service providers to attend.

Web Workshop Agenda:

- Introduction and Agenda/ Objectives
- Sarah Buss - presentation of promising practices used in Boulder CO, USA
- Q&A Session with Sarah
- Next Steps: Discussion about how to move these ideas and practices forward locally

(Excerpt from web workshop invitation offered by the City of St. John's in St. John's, NL)



Training and Education on Indigenous Cultural Awareness

In one instance, a Program Director reached out to bring Indigenous leaders to the table by saying, "All I know is that I don't know." This set a positive tone and direction for a productive working relationship. It's okay if the program and its staff need more information. Recognize the need and take steps to seek out information.

(Excerpt from a consultation with the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness in Victoria, BC)

Provide training and education for staff on topics such as:

- Understanding Indigenous cultural values, tradition, communication, learning styles and history
- Understanding cultural "ways" - the means by which culture is expressed
- Colonization and decolonization

STAGE TWO: RECRUITING LANDLORDS



Once the necessary planning and preparation work has been done, it is time to begin actively recruiting landlords who will be willing to rent to program participants. In this stage, the Housing First program must locate and connect to landlords to begin to build relationships.

UNDERSTAND LANDLORDS' MOTIVATIONS AND CONCERNS

Learn about the factors that motivate landlords to rent to Housing First program participants as well as the concerns that may dissuade them from doing so. This information is important for proactively developing an effective marketing strategy.

Landlords are typically motivated to rent to Housing First program participants for two reasons:

1. Financial reasons - guaranteed rent, cost savings
2. Prosocial or altruistic reasons - possibly as a result of personal experiences



Direct excerpts from the consultations



Copies of program materials



Indigenous content



Key questions

Typical landlord concerns may include:

- Where the rent will come from and whether the source will be reliable
- How renting to high-risk tenants will affect insurance rates
- The hassles of dealing with income assistance payments
- Lack of control
- Who will be held accountable if issues arise
- Whether tenancy rules can be enforced, whether evictions will be possible
- Lack of input into screening prospective tenants
- Participants' lack of housing references and/or poor credit
- Substance use and mental health issues among program participants
- Traffic and guest management issues
- Bedbugs
- Property damage
- Safety risks
- Nuisance and disturbances for other tenants in the building
- Turnover and empty units

DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGY

Developing an effective marketing strategy involves identifying the selling points of the program and perfecting the sales pitch that will be made to landlords.



Key Questions to Consider

- What resources do you have available?
- What funds do you have to support tenants?
- What does the tenant support package look like?
- What type of case management support does the tenant receive? Who offers it, and how?
- What can landlords expect from you?
- What do you expect from landlords?
- What promises/guarantees can you make?
- What incentives can you offer landlords?
- How responsive can you be?
- How frequently can you communicate with landlords?
- What are your agency's previous successes and accomplishments?
- What will your assessment/screening process look like?
- How will you educate participants on their rights and responsibilities as tenants?

An effective marketing strategy will address landlords' needs and goals by emphasizing the following common selling points of renting to Housing First tenants:

- Guaranteed rent payments, in full and on time, made directly to the landlord
- Rent deposits – first and last month's rent, damage deposit, etc.
- Reduced vacancies and quick turn-around
- Limited turnover – Housing First is a long-term support service, looking for a permanent home
- Mitigation fund – covering damages, vacancy loss
- Regular inspections of units by program staff
- Tenant education
- Careful screening of tenants to ensure good fit
- Clinical services delivered by a skilled and responsive team
- Regular home visits to offer services to tenants

- Eviction planning and prevention strategies
- Rehousing of tenants when needed
- Designated point of contact to call if problems arise
- Crisis management support available 24/7
- Opportunity to give back to the community and help people in need

TIPS

Don't over-promise. Remember, the promise is not a problem-free tenancy. The promise is to respond when issues arise.



Some strategies will work better with smaller landlords while others will work better with larger landlords. Develop a tailored strategy for each group.



Strategies to Pitch the Program

The statistics approach: Remind landlords that, statistically, 30% of tenants in their buildings will have a mental health challenge in their lifetime. Point out that landlords already rent to people who have a mental illness, many of whom are excellent tenants. For instance, you might say, “As a landlord, you are taking a risk with any tenant, but when you rent to participants in our program, our team is there to mitigate risks and offer you support.”

The testimonial approach: Highlight success stories. Provide the landlord with true (anonymous) stories of tenants who have experienced housing stability that has transformed their lives. Share the stories of landlords who were initially skeptical, but went on to have positive experiences renting to program participants.

 **TIP**

Consider developing a testimonial video, like the one entitled “[Landlord Perspective](#),” used by the City of St. John’s in St. John’s, NL.

The free advertising approach: Understand that some landlords may have certain units that are harder to fill, or have high turnover or vacancy rates. Emphasize that the program has access to a pool of potential tenants who are carefully screened. Explain to the landlord that by working with the program, they can reduce vacancy rates while saving the time and money usually associated with advertising a vacant unit.

DEVELOP MARKETING MATERIALS

Develop professional, eye-catching marketing materials to distribute to landlords. Examples of the kinds of marketing materials used by Housing First programs include:

- Agency and program-specific brochures
- One-page information handouts or fact sheets
- Letters explaining the program
- Business cards
- Process map explaining how the program works and the service pathway that users follow
- General information about homelessness, poverty and mental health
- Annual reports from the agency
- Positive media coverage of the agency or program
- Testimonial letters from other landlords
- Agency website
- Social media – Twitter, Facebook
- Letter of support prepared by program staff that can be attached to a rent application
- Promotional videos
- Community newsletter



See Appendix D for a copy of a promotional brochure used by the Landlord Partnership Program in Ottawa, ON.

See Appendix E for a copy of the program description used by CMHA Ottawa in Ottawa, ON.

IDENTIFY ACCESS POINTS

Where can Housing First programs find landlords to connect with? It can be difficult to know where to start.

Some access points that Housing First programs have used to reach landlords include:

- Rent notices in newspapers and online
- Public registrar or land registry
- Real estate agencies – often have listings of rental housing
- Real estate developers and investors
- Real estate classified ads
- Landlord/property management associations and industry groups – attend a meeting, make a presentation, set up an exhibition booth or stand, ask to slip a program brochure into their information package

- Trade shows and trade magazines
- Church groups
- “Warm Hits” – landlords who have previously worked with other local housing assistance programs
- Media releases – write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper explaining the program
- Radio interviews
- Publicized launch events
- Social media campaigns
- Mailouts
- Cold calls
- Word of mouth
- Advertisements in newspapers or publications of landlord/property management associations
- Pounding the pavement – looking for “for rent” signs
- New buildings under construction – often required to set aside a certain number of units as affordable housing

TIP

Keep track of landlord engagement efforts by maintaining a log or starting a database. Record pertinent information about the landlord and the property, document the steps taken to contact the landlord, and identify future action items such as a follow-up phone call or visit.



See Appendix G for excerpts from the Sales Call Guide used by the Landlord Partnership Program in Ottawa, ON.

See Appendix F for a copy of letters, emails and phone calls used by Stella's Circle and Front Step in St. John's, NL.

ADOPT A TRANSPARENT APPROACH

Developing an open and honest relationship with landlords is critical for the program's success. Be as upfront as possible with landlords so they know what to expect, and they understand what the program can and can't do. Never hide the facts; doing so risks the program's reputation. Never promise things that cannot be delivered or are out of the program's control. Similarly, always follow through on any promises that are made.



TIPS

Consider targeting medium landlords to start. Small landlords may be more risk averse and have lower tolerance for challenging behaviour, especially if they live in the building themselves. Large landlords have property management firms that may have overly strict screening policies and staff who have less autonomy to make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.



Make sure the message is reaching the right person. Go above building superintendents to speak to their superiors who determine whether a tenant's application is accepted or denied. Large landlords may have a head office in another city that processes the applications. Speak to the head office directly to discuss opting out of some of the aspects of the application form, such as the credit check, criminal record check, and previous landlord reference check.⁷



Communication with landlords must strike a balance. Provide the necessary information without compromising participant confidentiality and privacy. It can be helpful to speak in general terms, rather than discussing a specific participant. For example, "In our program, we typically serve people who have lived experience of mental illness."

⁷ From a consultation with the Booth Centre, 2017 - Ottawa, ON

“

I aim to be as transparent as possible with prospective landlords. I am not just looking for a one-off unit for someone. I am looking to develop and continue good, long-term working relationships with landlords in our community.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Stella's Circle in St. John's, NL)

”

BE PERSISTENT

Don't give up! Relationships take time to build. Even if a landlord does not initially express interest, continue to nurture the relationship; the landlord may change their mind over time and as they become more familiar with the program and the housing team.

“

You just have to get your foot in one door and have one good experience, and it grows from there. If you get someone in a large apartment building and they have a good experience, other units will become available.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Stella's Circle in St. John's, NL)

”

ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN THE LANDLORD AND THE HOUSING COORDINATOR

It can be helpful for the housing coordinator to meet with a new landlord alone, before introducing the landlord to a prospective tenant. Try to set up a meeting or grab a coffee before arranging to view a unit. In the initial meeting, explain key details of the program (how rent is paid, how damages are covered, what type of support is available to both landlords and tenants) and answer any questions the landlord may have.



TIP

Sometimes it may be preferable to invite a landlord to visit the agency that is delivering the Housing First program. This allows landlords to see for themselves that the program is part of a legitimate, established agency. Sometimes it also helps for landlords to meet the “boss” (manager) of the program.⁸

⁸ From a consultation with Woods Homes, 2017 - Lethbridge, AB

“

As a Housing Locator, I prefer to schedule two unit viewings: one that I go alone to, and one that I go to with the case manager and prospective tenant. At the first viewing, I gather all of the necessary information.

I point out any issues with the unit that need to be resolved – like a light bulb that needs to be replaced. I sometimes negotiate the price with the landlord. I bring a map with me indicating the average price of comparable rental units in the neighbourhood and I will challenge a landlord if their unit is overpriced.

(Excerpt from a consultation with the Booth Centre in Ottawa, ON)

”

“

You don't build a relationship with a landlord unless they see your face. What we sell is the relationship. We pitch the program, but what they buy is me, the personal connection that I am making with them. What's hooked them is that relationship.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Pacifica Housing in Victoria, BC)

”

ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN THE LANDLORD AND THE PARTICIPANT

Participants should meet with their prospective landlord, view the unit and make the final decision. Clinical and/or housing team members should generally accompany participants to their first meeting with the landlord and should clearly explain the terms and conditions of the lease.

Note that not all programs arrange a first visit without the prospective tenant present. Some programs prefer to involve tenants from the start and may even encourage a prospective tenant to attend the first visit on their own.

Incidents of discrimination, stigma and coercion can occur at unit viewings. Clinical and/or housing team members should educate participants about their rights as tenants and should be prepared to intervene if necessary.



TIP

If the participant fails to show up without giving notice, the clinical and/or housing team members should go to the viewing anyway so as not to waste the landlord's time.⁹

⁹ From a consultation with the Booth Centre, 2017 - Ottawa, ON

“

During the initial one-on-one meeting with the landlord, I'm often asked personal questions about the participant's life. I will share basic information, but encourage the landlord to ask the participant themselves. Before they meet, I do prepare the participant for these questions and kindly broach the subject of 'over-sharing'. I have found role-playing these initial meetings with the participants to be quite effective.

When it does come time for the viewing, the reality is often that landlords may rent to someone based on their physical appearance. I use the analogy of attending a job interview and wanting to look spiffy! Workers can assist by bringing a donated change of clothes or ideally, connect with a local gym or drop-in service provider that would allow shower usage as participants are sometimes hesitant to use the facilities at the shelter. When the client is feeling more confident, they are more apt to project that during the viewing.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Woods Homes in Lethbridge, AB)

”



Be prepared to confront racism and discrimination if and when it arises during an initial meeting. Housing First program providers and program participants frequently report that landlords openly discriminate against Indigenous participants.

“

We have heard stories and experiences from the Aboriginal Street Community that point to systemic barriers and racism. It starts off okay on the phone. The landlord is open to the participant coming to look at a place. But when they arrive, when the participant is visually seen, they are told, 'It's already been rented. It's not available.' Or in other situations, a worker will be speaking on the phone to a landlord, and it's going well, but then in the conversation it comes out that the person is First Nations from this community, or they have an obvious Indigenous name, and suddenly the landlord says it's not available.

(Excerpt from a consultation with the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness in Victoria, BC)

”

EDUCATE LANDLORDS

Housing First program providers may find themselves in a teaching role when working with landlords early on in the relationship. Part of providing good customer service is sharing important information with landlords that can benefit them and the program participants they work with.

Some Housing First programs develop information packages, educational resources, training programs or workshops for landlords. Others offer education more informally through their daily interactions with landlords or during events such as appreciation lunches.

Landlords may need or want education on the following:

- The common reasons that a unit fails an inspection
- Energy efficiency incentive programs
- Fire safety
- Property standards and by law, building codes
- Rights and responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act
- Navigating the income assistance system
- Human rights in rental housing
- Conflict resolution/mediation skills
- Crisis planning
- Mental health first aid
- Myths and realities of mental illness, addiction and homelessness
- Eviction prevention strategies

TIPS

[The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation](#) offers plain language resources for landlords, including a guide for new landlords and fact sheets for every province and territory.



[The Ontario Human Rights Commission](#) has an information section for landlords that outlines human rights in housing.



Role Modelling

You will deal with landlords who will say terrible, derogatory things to you about clients. Sometimes you have to let that roll off your back because at the end of the day we are working toward the greater good, which is maintaining people's housing. But along the way, you can role model the right language, and impart some of your values through a slow, consistent relationship-building process.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Pacifica Housing in Victoria, BC)



Provide cultural education or sensitivity training for landlords. Focus on helping landlords understand and appreciate that an Indigenous tenant may have different traditional values and systems that may not conform to Western norms or expectations in housing. Educate landlords about colonialism and systemic racism, and how colonial policies have affected the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of individuals and communities.

EDUCATE TENANTS

Housing First program providers can promote successful tenancies by educating and training participants prior to, during and after move-in. Effective education can prevent many of the problems that threaten a tenancy. Landlords may be persuaded to rent

to participants if they know that the program provides comprehensive ongoing education, training and support.

Many programs develop a move-in package for participants. Some host regular education sessions for tenants, such as an ongoing tenancy maintenance group. Case managers play an integral role in providing education and life skills training to each individual participant they work with.

Tenants may need or want education on the following:

Before move-in

- Selecting housing that meets needs
- Approaching and meeting a landlord
- Roles and responsibilities of the tenant, landlord and program
- Understanding the lease

TIPS

Consider using worksheets that case managers and tenants can complete together to review and summarize a lease. See the [Renter's Toolkit](#) used by Community Resources in the Region of Waterloo for ideas.

 If applicable, provide tenants with a container to safely dispose of sharps.¹⁰

 The program should keep copies of tenants' keys in case the keys are misplaced or the tenant is hospitalized

Move-in day

- Tour the home
- Make sure basic furnishings and necessities are in place • Instructions about appliances
- Heating/cooling system
- Building rules
- Garbage day
- Checking mail
- Taking care of keys, not making copies for friends and families
- Fire safety
- Locking doors and windows
- Turning off the stove, faucets

After move-in, during regular home visits

- Guest management
- Housekeeping
- Laundry
- Budgeting
- Basic DIY such as how to change light bulbs, bleed radiators, solve plumbing issues
- Basic cooking on a budget
- Conflict resolution skills for communicating with neighbours and landlords
- Crisis planning

¹⁰ From a consultation with AMHS, 2017 – Kingston, ON

 **TIPS**

“Ready to Rent BC offers Rent Smart, a 12-hour course for tenants covering topics like rights and responsibilities, living with neighbours, effective communication, budgeting, maintenance, crisis management, safety and pests. Tenants who complete the course receive an official Certificate of Completion which can be recognized by landlords and housing providers. Rent Smart can be completed online or program staff can learn to deliver the course themselves in-house through a Train the Trainer program. The TTT program includes a range tenant education courses and a landlord specific course. RentSmart Landlord is designed for landlords looking to solve housing issues in their communities. RentSmart is available in a growing number of provinces across Canada.

As of 2017, RentSmart is available in BC, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario.”

-  Refer to the tenant handbook developed by [Mainstay Housing](#), a non-profit supportive housing provider in Toronto, ON. The handbook, called “Beyond the Front Door: A Guide to Helping Tenants Keep their Homes,” is available online.

STAGE THREE: MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS



For a Housing First program to be sustainable, the program must maintain relationships with landlords over time. The program must be prepared to provide support to landlords throughout the many ups and downs that can occur during a tenancy.

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH LANDLORDS

Inadequate communication with program staff is one of the main issues identified by landlords.



Direct excerpts from the consultations



Copies of program materials



Indigenous content



Key questions



Communication Red Flags

- The landlord does not know or remember who to contact when a problem arises, so they do not call anyone, or they call the wrong person, who is unable to address the problem.
- The landlord calls after hours with an emergency, expecting an immediate response, but the call is not answered or the program has no capacity to respond.
- The landlord receives conflicting information from the clinical team and the housing team.
- The landlord calls the designated point of contact, but discovers a voicemail message saying the worker is away on vacation and won't be back for two weeks.¹¹

An effective two-way communication system can build trust and confidence in the program. Open, consistent communication is critical to intervening early when problems arise.

Effective communication systems between the program and the landlord should adhere to the following key principles:

- Don't waste landlords' time – all communication should be purposeful
- Never divulge confidential information about the tenant
- Document all communication and share meeting minutes with all parties

- Provide landlords with a single point of direct contact with the program
- Establish regular, scheduled check-ins – e.g., check in with the landlord by the 5th of every month
- Provide after-hours support, such as a 24/7 on-call cell phone number
- Respond to every single call



TIPS

If the landlord/property manager/superintendent is on site, make a habit of knocking on their door after every home visit with a tenant. This opens up a line of communication while also reassuring the landlord that the tenant is receiving the support that was promised.



After-hours emergency call lines should be a direct point of contact that offer quick, solutions-focused assistance. Call lines that refer a caller to another agency, take a message or do not have the capacity to respond immediately are not helpful and can aggravate an already tense situation.



Creating a monthly newsletter can be an efficient way to share information and resources with all landlords at once and keep them up to date on any changes. The newsletter can be distributed via email or mail.

¹¹ Mainstay Housing (2005)



See Appendix H for a copy of New Lease, the landlord newsletter produced by the City of St. John's, NL.

TREAT THE LANDLORD LIKE A BUSINESS CLIENT

Housing First programs should view the landlord as a business client or customer. Demonstrate respect for and understanding of the landlord's needs and goals, which may differ from those of the program or tenant. Remain a neutral intermediary that works for the best interest of both the landlord and the tenant. Solve problems collaboratively, through open dialogue, consensus building and mutual respect.

In difficult situations, consider that landlords may be feeling some of the following:

- Disrespected, sad or angry when their property has been damaged or mismanaged
- Tired and stressed when tenants cause additional work or time-consuming complaints from neighbours
- Worried when tenants display risky behaviour that could harm property or people
- Abandoned or neglected when they try to reach out for help but are ignored
- Unimportant and disregarded when they are not consulted in advance

CAREFULLY SCREEN TENANTS

Landlords worry about how a Housing First program will screen its participants. When done well, screening tenants and matching them to a unit can promote a successful tenancy and build a stronger relationship with the landlord. Programs should discuss screening criteria with the landlord.

Housing First programs should consider the fit between the tenant, the landlord, the unit and the building as a whole. Although the program plays an important role in screening, the final decision must be made by the participant and the landlord—forced relationships are not fair or effective.

Make sure the tenant is a good fit for the landlord

Play the long game! It is best to place a program participant who has a low-to-medium acuity level into a unit with a new landlord. If the first participant that a new landlord rents to is very challenging, the landlord may choose to discontinue the relationship with the program. By contrast, a new landlord who has a positive first experience will be more likely to rent more units and take on higher risk participants later on.

To prevent burnout, make sure a single landlord is not renting to a number of high-risk tenants simultaneously or consecutively. If a landlord has just had a difficult tenant and gone through an eviction process, the program should make every effort to make sure the next participant will not cause similar problems.

Make sure the unit is a good fit for the tenant

Participant choice is a fundamental principle of Housing First. Participants should have housing options available to them and should choose the unit that is the best fit for them. Giving participants the choice in housing promotes pride of ownership and increases the chance of a successful long-term tenancy.

Help participants identify their housing needs, considering factors such as:

- Location – proximity to services, existing support networks
- Type of home – shared accommodation, basement unit, large apartment building
- Amenities – laundry, balcony
- Affordability – cost of rent, utilities, deposit
- Rules – smoking, pets
- Accessibility

Make sure the tenant is a good fit for the building

Be mindful of putting too many program participants in a single building, which can overwhelm the landlord and the community. Guidelines for the Housing First model indicate that fewer than 20% of tenants in a multiple housing unit (such as an apartment block) should originate from a Housing First program.

It is a good idea to stagger intake into a building, rather than moving in multiple participants at a time.

Carefully consider the person-environment fit. Match tenants to the building culture and composition. Some buildings are preferable for mature tenants.



When considering participant-housing fit, be mindful of the differences between Western normative culture and Indigenous conceptions of “home.” For many Indigenous people, an essential part of home is living communally and performing cultural and spiritual ceremonies with family, friends and community members. But most available housing was not designed or built through this lens.

The importance of offering culturally responsive services extends to the physical housing space itself. Help participants identify living situations that support their emotional and spiritual well-being. Consider details such as where a smoke alarm is located in a unit (which may have implications for smudging ceremonies), whether a unit has an open or closed concept design, whether the unit has a large kitchen for communal and family food preparation, and whether a building has a communal gathering space.¹²

¹² From a consultation with the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness, 2017 – Victoria, 2017



Screening a Tenant

Even though there is always a huge pressure to house people as soon as possible, take some time or as much time as possible to assess the person, especially with regards to back story and past experiences. Even if it takes multiple meetings or talking to other people, taking the time to get a clear picture of what their previous housing experience has looked like goes a long way to matching them. The more you know about a person's back story and history the easier it is. And you can obviously never know everything about a client, so you have to make the decision with what you have, but taking more time at the beginning often pays greater dividends in terms of stability, for sure.

Consider history of damage, history of violence, arson history, what were the reasons they were evicted before? Are they in the habit of destroying a place? Are ambulances and the police showing up all the time? Sometimes clients will even let you talk to previous landlords. If they have references, you should call and check with them first before you pass them on.

Don't put a person with a certain behavior or lifestyle in a neighbourhood with a low tolerance level.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Stella's Circle in St. John's, NL)



PROVIDE RESPONSIVE SUPPORT TO LANDLORDS

Landlords need to know exactly what support is available, from whom, and how quickly it can be delivered. It is good practice to guarantee a response to all landlord concerns within two business days. Landlords may want help mediating conflict with a tenant, moving out a problem tenant, or dealing with a tenant in crisis.

ANTICIPATE AND MITIGATE RISKS

Housing First programs should strive for prevention and early intervention. Understand the problems that commonly occur during a tenancy and put a proactive, solution-focused plan in place to address them.



Regarding tough conversations with landlords: don't shy away! Although uncomfortable sometimes, these moments are defining opportunities to demonstrate the uniqueness of what Housing First has to offer.

Meet with the landlord or call them back as soon as possible. Allow them to vent. Validate their frustrations. "I'm hearing you, and this is what we can do to address the problem." Responsiveness is truly the key to success.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Woods Homes in Lethbridge, AB)



COMMON ISSUES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

 **TIP:** Engage participants and landlords directly to make sure their voices are heard and they are actively involved in solving any issues that arise.

Common Issues	Potential Solutions
Isolation, loneliness, and boredom	Provide support for participants around community integration and engagement in meaningful activities. Connect the tenant to peer support and natural social support networks.
Indigenous participants may experience a sense of community and family loss when housed, especially if living in an urban area separated from their home community. ¹³	Make sure housing is located close to existing social networks whenever possible. Connect participants to culturally responsive services that focus on a sense of community and connection with culture. Offer a peer mentorship program.
Unpaid rent – e.g., a tenant cancels the direct pay arrangement with income assistance, or income assistance has an incorrect mailing address in the system.	Check in with the landlord by the 5th of every month to confirm that rent has been paid. Maintain a close working relationship with income assistance. Educate tenants about their rights and responsibilities.
Landlord is non-responsive or unreachable.	Screen landlords before accepting them into the program. Consult with other community stakeholders and tenants themselves to learn about a landlord's reputation prior to working with them.
Maintenance work is not done.	Educate the landlord about their rights and responsibilities. Involve the city's property standards or by-law department. Consult a local legal clinic for guidance.

¹³ From a consultation with the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness, 2017 – Victoria, 2017

Common Issues	Potential Solutions
Problems with guests	Develop a guest management policy with the tenant and help them set boundaries and manage personal space to prevent others from taking over their apartment. Connect guests to supports and services as needed.
In Indigenous communities, family and community are highly valued. Home is often considered a family space.	Recognize that welcoming guests is a valid and important cultural practice. Identify housing arrangements that offer more communal settings. Provide dedicated common spaces for participants to hold ceremonies and other social gatherings, such as a community meal.
Landlords don't respect boundaries - e.g., illegally enter units, constantly monitor tenants.	Educate landlords about the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants. Educate landlords about common myths and misperceptions surrounding participants. Assure landlords that tenants are receiving regular home visits through the program.
Indigenous tenants in Housing First programs have previously indicated that this issue arises when landlords have racist or prejudicial beliefs and can have a serious detrimental effect on their tenancy.	Assure landlords that tenants are receiving regular home visits through the program.
Anti-social or illegal behaviour	Understand the tolerance level of the landlord, building and neighbourhood, and screen participants appropriately. Provide intensive supports to participants, including frequent home visits. Work with participants to identify ways to limit the effects that their behaviour may have on others.
Housekeeping issues, failure to take out garbage	Develop a cleaning schedule with the tenant. Shop for cleaning supplies. Call the tenant to remind them about garbage day for the first couple weeks after move-in. Purchase a calendar for the tenant.



Establish an Early Warning System with Participants

Ask the participant how they can recognize they are unwell. Come to an agreement of what they will do, or who they will call, if they identify these signs.

Ask the participant how other people can recognize if they are unwell. Encourage the participant to give their landlord or a neighbour permission to call a case manager directly if they see any of these signs, or anything else that is worrisome.



The Importance of a Preventative Approach

We hear about the repercussions of a single bad experience to this day. It can act as a very long-standing barrier. Once that narrative is there, it gets entrenched. All the programs in the community are all the same to landlords. It takes you years to overcome.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Pacifica Housing in Victoria, BC)



Mediating Issues

We often come together as landlord liaison, case manager and client. And then sometimes even the landlord will join. We will have these big meetings, where everyone can be advocated for, everyone can say their piece, things can be mediated upon, everyone can get on the same page.

(Excerpt from a consultation with Pacifica Housing in Victoria, BC)



COMMIT TO REPAIRING DAMAGES

Damage is one of the primary reasons that a landlord will refuse to rent to Housing First program participants. Making a commitment to compensate landlords for damages is critical to building relationships and establishing trust.

Programs should be proactive about repairing damages. When damage is minor, it can often be repaired without involving the landlord.

Programs can provide cleaning and junk removal services, and help remove drug paraphernalia.



TIP

Actively involve the participant in the process of addressing damages. This can be a learning opportunity about the rights and responsibilities of a tenant.



Steps to Take During an Eviction

1. Promptly set up a face-to-face meeting with the housing coordinator, case manager, landlord and tenant. Try to work out a mutually agreeable plan for the tenant to move out. Draft an agreement signed by the landlord and tenant. Be mindful of tenant rights and make sure the arrangement is fair.
- TIP:** Where possible, avoid a formal eviction process. It is usually best for all parties if the tenant can be rehoused without an eviction on their record, and the landlord can avoid the cost, time and energy of a formal eviction.
2. Provide support to the tenant to move their belongings, put them in storage and search for a new place to stay. Reassure the tenant that the program will still be there to support them. Help the tenant learn from the experience as a stepping stone to a more successful tenancy the next time around.
 3. Clean the unit, remove garbage and repair damages.
 4. Meet with the landlord to discuss the problem. Allow them to vent. Bring stability to the situation as much as possible.
 5. Offer to move a new program participant into the unit to make sure rent payments continue. If the landlord accepts, carefully screen the new tenant. If the landlord declines, stay in touch and continue to communicate regularly, without asking for anything.

HANDLE EVICTIONS CAREFULLY

Evictions pose one of the biggest risks to the relationship between the program and the landlord. If a tenancy is problematic and an eviction is about to happen, there are steps that can be taken to minimize the fallout and preserve the relationship with the landlord.

PROVIDE INTENSIVE SUPPORT TO PARTICIPANTS

For Housing First to work, program participants must receive adequate support.

Landlords frequently comment on the importance of home visits. The clinical team must visit the participant at their home on a weekly basis, or more frequently when a participant has recently moved or is at risk of eviction. Home visits allow program providers to see the condition of the unit and intervene early if issues such as bedbugs, hoarding, damage or guest problems arise. cancels or misses two consecutive appointments, go to the apartment to intervene and remind them that support is available.



Provide culturally responsive services to participants who identify as Indigenous. Focus on building a sense of community and connection to culture. Be mindful of the unique First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures.

Activities and support could include:

- Teaching and sharing circles
- Regular on-site visits from Elders
- A community resource room for social gatherings
- Beading, cedar bark weaving, blanket making, drumming
- Celebrations and ceremonies
- A weekly women's circle
- A tailored mentorship group or peer support program
- Therapeutic services to address intergenerational trauma from an Indigenous world view

We held a ceremony before they entered housing. We brought in an Elder, who did a traditional brushing off. We brought in a cultural mentor who did a smudging. It was like taking the past off their shoulders. It was like a milestone. It felt like “you’re part of something; you belong.” Our goal was to foster a sense of belonging and community.

(Excerpt from a consultation with the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness in Victoria, BC)

TIPS

If a program participant postpones, cancels or misses two consecutive appointments, go to the apartment to intervene and remind them that support is available.

 Make sure participants are familiar with and known to more than one clinical team member. Participants may have a primary case manager, but if the case manager is away or unavailable, another team member should be able to step in.¹⁴

¹⁴ From consultation with Pacifica Housing, 2017 - Victoria, BC.

STAGE FOUR: WORKING TOGETHER AS PARTNERS



After several years of operation, Housing First programs have usually established a reliable pool of landlords who have rented to numerous participants and are familiar with the program. At this mature stage, the program can focus on working with landlords in a mutually beneficial, long term partnership.

RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS LANDLORDS MAKE

Say thank you! It is important to let landlords know that the contributions they make to the program’s success are recognized and appreciated.

Consider the following ways to demonstrate appreciation for landlords:

- Small gifts such as cards and boxes of chocolate to celebrate holidays
- A framed certificate of appreciation or a plaque
- Thank you notes, signed by staff and program participants
- A landlord “spotlight” in a community newsletter, email or annual report
- A “landlord of the year” award, presented at the agency’s annual general meeting
- Invitations to attend the agency’s annual holiday parties or fundraising events
- An annual appreciation breakfast
- Treating the landlord to coffee or lunch
- Occasional favours such as paying for lawn to be cut or snow shoveled



Direct excerpts from the consultations



Copies of program materials



Indigenous content



Key questions

CONDUCT EVALUATION

It is important to gather information and feedback from landlords to evaluate whether the landlord engagement strategy is working and what improvements could be made. Evaluation activities show landlords that the Housing First program values their input and is committed to meeting their needs. Share the results of the evaluation with landlords in a brief, plain language report that describes how the program will implement any recommended changes.

Consider the following ways to involve landlords in evaluating the program:

- Collecting feedback forms from landlords who attend program meetings or events
- Sending annual satisfaction surveys to landlords via email or mail
- Conducting interviews, focus groups or questionnaires with landlords via phone or in person

In addition to hearing directly from landlords, collecting and compiling data to understand program outputs and outcomes can be useful. Consider reviewing the following data on an annual basis and making recommendations if the data suggest that there are problems:

- Number of landlords renting to program participants
- Number of units
- Number of unit showings attended by staff and participants

- Average number of weekly contacts between staff and landlords
- Length of time between participants entering the program and being housed
- Number of after-hours calls received
- Number of evictions, and reasons
- Number of planned moves, and reasons
- Number of times participants were rehoused
- Number of damage claims submitted and the cost
- Number of failed unit inspections, and reasons
- Number of complaints received from tenants and landlords, and reasons



TIP

It is important to examine the experiences of First Nations, Métis and Inuit participants in the program. When collecting and analyzing data, consider distinguishing between subpopulations within the overall group of program participants.

It is equally important to hear directly from program participants to learn what is and is not working well with their landlords and housing. Include the voice of program participants in evaluation work through interviews, focus groups or surveys.



Consider the ways an Indigenous research methodological approach could be used to guide the evaluation work, including key features such as ceremony, circle process and relational accountability.



See Appendix I for the landlord satisfaction survey prepared by Home Base Housing in Kingston, ON.

HOST LANDLORD FORUMS

Established Housing First programs may wish to bring together a number of landlords involved in the program for a forum or roundtable event. These types of events promote communication and knowledge exchange.

A landlord forum may have the following objectives:

- Clarify roles, responsibilities and rights of all stakeholders

- Facilitate communication and shared problem-solving
- Strengthen working relationships and promote ongoing engagement
- Provide education and training - consider having program staff members, experienced landlords or outside experts make a presentation
- Provide updates on program changes
- Express new ideas or concerns
- Enhance knowledge of services and processes
- Networking



TIPS

Offer food and beverages to attendees. Consider featuring door prizes as an incentive to attend. Hold the event at a convenient time and location. Provide free parking.



Be sure to provide a tangible deliverable for attendees, such as a list of resources and phone numbers to address crisis situations, or a summary of new ideas to handle guest management issues.



Make sure landlords understand that participant confidentiality must be respected and that it is not appropriate to discuss issues about specific tenants with one another.



Begin by recognizing that the event is being held on traditional lands. Consider having an Elder present to hold an opening prayer to start the event.

INVITE LANDLORDS TO CONTRIBUTE IN OTHER WAYS

Landlords who have been highly engaged with the program may be interested in contributing in other ways, beyond just renting to participants.

Consider the following engagement opportunities for landlord partners:

- Participating in a Community Advisory Board for the Housing First program
- Training other landlords
- Promoting the program in the community
- Providing testimonials or acting as a reference for the program
- Participating in marketing and outreach efforts to recruit new landlords
- Helping to develop a tenant education program
- Presenting at landlord/property management association meetings

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Resources Available Online

Distasio, J. & McCullough, S. (2016). Eviction Prevention: Toolkit of Promising Practices. Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg. homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/2016%20Eviction%20Prevention%20Toolkit%20-%20FINAL.pdf

This resource outlines approaches and tools that can be used to stem evictions and promote success-based housing.

Distasio, J. & McCullough, S. (2014). Holding On!: Supporting Successful Tenancies for the Hard to House. Best Practices Research Report. homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/2014%20Successful%20Tenancies%20-%20FINAL.pdf

This resource provides information on matching of tenants to housing and neighbourhoods, head lease agreements, tenant agreements and planned moves.

Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy (n.d.). Applying lessons on landlord engagement from across the globe to the local context of Maple Ridge homelessness service provision. Report prepared for the Alouette Home Start Society. <http://www.gvss.ca/PDF-2014/Landlord%20Engagement%20-%20Society%20Resource.pdf>

This resource includes an overview of landlord engagement before, during, and after completion of a tenancy. Uses a local program, Maple Ridge, as a case study.

HUD Exchange (n.d.). Housing Search Assistance Toolkit: Landlord Outreach and Recruitment Resources. US Department of Housing and Urban Development. www.hudexchange.info/resources/housingsearchtool/?housingsearchtoolaction=public:main.landlord-outreach-and-recruitment-resources

This resource includes a checklist of benefits for landlords, a marketing letter, an information template, and a landlord-tenant-case manager communication agreement.

King County Washington (2015). Landlord Liaison Project: Step by Step Application Process and Forms. portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=Landlord-Liaison.pdf

This resource includes an overview of a Housing First program, a copy of a landlord partnership agreement, a landlord intake form, an outline of tenant screening process and criteria and a client release of information form.

Mainstay Housing (2005). Beyond the Key to the Front Door: A Guide to Helping Tenants Keep their Homes. www.mainstayhousing.ca/PDF/Participant'sGuide%20REVISEDv1.pdf

This resource includes an overview of landlord-tenant law, a checklist of things to discuss with a landlord, a unit inspection form, and a move-in check list.

Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness (n.d.). Strategies for Working with Landlords: Tool kit. www.michigan.gov/documents/mcteh/Landlord_tool_kit_549020_7.pdf

This resource includes sample materials to assist in facilitating landlord forums, such as agendas, flyers, and presentations.

Polvere, L., MacLeod, T., Macnaughton, E., Caplan, R., Piat, M., Nelson, G., Gaetz, S., & Goering, P. (2014). Canadian Housing First Toolkit: The At Home/Chez Soi Experience. Calgary and Toronto: Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Homeless Hub. www.housingfirsttoolkit.ca/resources

This resource includes protocols, job descriptions, and a sample newsletter for landlords, as used in the at Home/Chez Soi project.

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APPENDIX A | EXAMPLE OF A LANDLORD SURVEY: CITY OF ST JOHN'S, NL

WHO IS A LANDLORD? Anyone who receives payments to have individuals live at a property they own or manage in St. John's. These payments may come from any source (i.e. individuals, AES, Eastern Health, NLHC, etc.) and can be for various types of accommodations (i.e. bedsitting rooms, personal care/community care homes, individuals with basement apartments, emergency shelters, etc.).

Does this sound like you? If yes, we need your help and input! We would like to learn more about St. John's landlords in order to make our community stronger. This survey should only take 5-10 minutes and one lucky landlord who completes the survey and signs up for our electronic newsletter will be entered to win a \$500 gift card from the home improvement store of their choice (you MUST be a landlord as defined above to be eligible to win the gift card prize)!

What is the Issue? In the middle of a shortage of safe, affordable rental units, it is necessary to engage local landlords in the promotion of successful tenancies which benefit people who need rental housing as well as those who provide this important service. The City of St. John's is coordinating this survey in collaboration with the Rental Team (of the Affordable Housing Working Group) to promote dialogue and engage landlords on this issue. Working with our partners to create and maintain affordable rental homes is one of the priority areas in the City's Affordable Housing Business Plan. We aim to gather further input and ideas from this anonymous survey to assist us in developing a community-wide landlord engagement strategy.

This survey will close on October 17, 2016.

Your time is valuable so we would like to say thank you for taking a few minutes to share your ideas about what it is like to be a landlord in St. John's.

1. Which best describes you? (check all that apply):

Property Owner/Landlord

Property Manager

Other (please specify)

2. What kind of rental properties do you have? (check all that apply):

Single detached house

Semi-detached or duplex

Townhouse or row house

Rooming house (shared kitchen/bathroom)

Single-room occupancy - SRO (similar to rooming house but with own kitchen/bathroom)

Basement apartment

- Main Floor apartment
 Apartment building
 Accessible units
 Other (please specify)

3. In what area(s) do you currently own or manage rental properties? (check all that apply):

- St. John's East
 St. John's Centre
 St. John's North
 St. John's West
 Goulds
 Kilbride
 Shea Heights
 Southlands
 Mount Pearl
 Other (please specify)

4. Please help us gather some basic facts about your rental properties (check all that apply)

NOTE: Rental property includes basement apartment and all rooms available for rent.

- 1-5 units
 6-10 units
 11-50 units
 50+ units

5. Please describe the average rent WITHOUT utilities:

	Bachelor	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 + Bed
under \$600/mo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$601 - \$800/mo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$801 - \$1000/mo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$1001 - \$1500/mo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$1501 - \$2000/mo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$2000 +/mo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please feel free to add a comment relating to the rental amounts:

6. Are there any particular types of individuals that you are less likely to rent to (i.e. students, seniors, individuals receiving income support, individuals with pets)?

Please list these groups here:

7. Are there specific reasons that you are less likely to rent to these individuals/groups?

8. We'd like to better understand the experiences of local landlords. Please rank the issues below according to how common they have been in your experience:

	Happens 5 + times a year	Happens 3 - 4 times a year	Happens 1 - 2 times a year	Has happened but in general less than once per year	Has never happened to me
Non-payment of rent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Issues related to tenant behaviors (i.e. conflict with neighbours/landlord, multiple visitors, loud/parties, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to rental unit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulties in receiving payment from tenant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulties in receiving payment from government agencies (e.g. AES)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please briefly describe any other issues you have encountered as a landlord:

9. Remember, your answers are confidential! We'd like to know more about how you normally interact with tenants. Please check all that regularly apply when you are renting out a unit:

- I have standard questions that I ask everyone who I interview, but I don't write down their answers.
- I have standard questions that I ask everyone, and I write down their answers.
- I ask for references from past landlords.
- I check references from past landlords.
- My tenant and I sign a condition of premises report.
- My tenants all sign a written lease.
- I take pictures of the unit before each tenant moves in.
- I know that the Newfoundland & Labrador Human Rights Act limits the questions I can ask, and I understand what these limits are.
- I ask questions about their current employment or ask for employment references.
- I check the prospective tenant out on the internet (Google, Facebook, etc.).
- I charge a security deposit.

Please add anything else you regularly do when renting out a unit.

10. If you checked that you charge a security deposit, how much on average is the deposit?

11. We're trying to better understand what supports currently exist for landlords. Please check all that you are aware of:

- I have read the Residential Tenancies Act.
- I have used the sample Rental Agreement.
- I have used the sample Rental Premises Condition Report.
- I have talked with the Newfoundland & Labrador Residential Tenancies Officer.
- I have searched online for landlord resources from other places.
- I have talked informally with other local landlords.
- I have talked with workers involved with my tenants (e.g. Social Workers, Community Workers, Housing Support Workers, etc.).

Please share any other sources of support you have found helpful in your role as a landlord:

12. You're almost done! Just a few more questions that get to the heart of why we are contacting you.

As a landlord, you can play a vital role in helping us to end homelessness! There are many potential tenants in St. John's who may have issues from their past that could keep them from being approved for an apartment. Unfortunately, many of these people end up homeless, in hospitals, or in other unstable housing - often repeating the same cycle over and over again. We are working together with our partners in the community to improve housing options for everyone.

Here are some tools and/or incentives that are used in other places... please check all that you think might be useful to local landlords.

- Public recognition of landlords (I.e. Friendly or Ethical Landlord Awards)
- Ability to select tenant population of interest for units (i.e., veteran, single parent, individuals with disabilities, etc.)
- User-friendly handbook on landlord and tenant issues, including sample forms
- Assigned case manager to help landlords and tenants address problems and mediate conflicts
- Telephone helpline available to help landlords and tenants address problems and mediate conflicts
- Housing workers to help link higher-risk tenants and landlords, and provide support
- Assistance with property improvements
- Access to low-interest loans to repair damage caused by tenants
- Funding to repair damages to unit
- Funding to make units more accessible
- Education/Information sessions for landlords
- Education/Information sessions for tenants
- Certificates from tenants who take education programs to understand their responsibilities
- Online members-only database for landlords to post affordable housing, where housing workers can help match clients (see Landlordconnect.ca)
- Landlords helping to advocate for improved housing allowances

Please feel free to add any other ideas/tools that could work:

13. What other ideas (further supports and programs) could help local landlords?

14. What makes a successful tenant/landlord relationship? (Feel free to share a success story!)

15. What information could help you as a Landlord (You can select more than one)?

- Municipal requirements to creating a secondary suite
- Residential Tenancies Act
- Policy on Human Rights and Rental Housing
- Duty to Accommodate under the Human Rights Code
- Information on Income Support
- Information on programs and supports offered to tenants by community groups
- Energy Efficiency Incentive Programs
- Making units more accessible
- Tenant Responsibilities
- Landlord Responsibilities
- Dealing with conflict
- Providing housing to individuals with barriers
- Tenant Insights (success stories, etc.)
- Fire safety
- Information on Property Standards By-Law
- Other (please specify)

16. Would you participate in future information or networking sessions for landlords?

- Yes
- No
- Other

Click 'Next' and then in the next screen click DONE and you'll be prompted to enter for a prize draw.

APPENDIX B | EXAMPLE OF A RENT SUPPLEMENT AGREEMENT WITH LANDLORDS CONTAINING A DAMAGE MITIGATION FUND: CITY OF KINGSTON, ON

1. The Service Manager's designate may, at its sole discretion, reimburse the Landlord for all reasonable expenses incurred by the Landlord, in repairing damage to the Unit up to a maximum amount to be determined by the Service Manager at its sole discretion, except for any repairs required as a result of normal wear and tear, if:
 - a. upon a termination of residency, the Landlord advises the Service Manager's designate, within two (2) business days of being made aware of the termination, where the Service Manager's designate completes a move-out inspection with the landlord and takes photos of damages within 3 days of being notified of possible damage; and
 - b. it is, in the opinion of the Service Manager or its designate working within the Housing First/ Rapid Re-Housing Program, necessary to repair a Unit, as a result of undue damage caused by the Rent Supplement Tenant or persons permitted in the Unit by him/her; and
 - c. the undue damage caused by the Rent Supplement Tenant or the Tenant's visitors is not the result of a peril which a prudent Landlord would normally insure against; and
2. The Landlord and Service Manager agree:
 - a. That should the Landlord, at any time, conduct regular inspections of the Unit occupied by the Tenant, with sufficient notice as required under the Residential Tenancies Act or Lease, as applicable, that the Landlord will make available to the Service Manager or its designate, any signed and dated inspection reports to confirm the condition of the Unit throughout the residency;
 - b. That the Service Manager's designate may obtain copies of any records kept by other parties (i.e., case management support workers) recording the condition of the Unit throughout the tenancy and may utilize this information in determining the allowance for the cost of damages.

APPENDIX C | EXAMPLE OF A HOUSING COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION: PACIFICA HOUSING IN VICTORIA, BC

Position Title: Landlord Liaison

Pay Range: 3

Department: Support Services

Reports to: Manager of Outreach Services

ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS:

As a non-profit charitable organization, Pacifica Housing's vision is better lives through affordable homes and community connections. Our mission is to be a leading innovative provider of affordable homes and support services that contribute to the independence of individuals and families.

The Landlord Liaison initiates and maintains relationships with private market landlords to create housing opportunities for clients with multiple barriers to stable housing accessing Pacifica's outreach programs.

POSITION'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

The position plays a key role in the delivery of services for the Downtown Outreach Services office, as the primary liaison with the private housing market and:

- engages private market landlords in the provision of housing opportunities and maintains positive working relationships;
- advises and consults with outreach workers regarding suitability of placements for clients;
- initiates and maintains community partnerships that enhance service delivery and housing options for individuals experiencing homelessness or significant barriers to stable housing;
- oversees compliance with relevant legislation and applicable reporting obligations.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Engaging private market landlords to identify housing opportunities and to develop and maintain successful partnerships, including:
 - acting as first point of contact for landlords and providing information, education and support regarding housing issues specific to our client group;
 - supporting landlords by trouble shooting/problem solving issues related to tenancies including managing damage claims;
 - ensuring legal compliance with relevant legislation such as the Residential Tenancy Act.

- 
2. Supporting the relationship between outreach staff and landlords on a day-to-day basis and providing on-going leadership of the program for both parties, including:
 - providing conflict resolution services for landlords, outreach workers and tenants;
 - consulting with Streets to Homes (S2H)/outreach workers in developing housing options;
 - attending weekly S2H/outreach team meetings;
 - providing input during the S2H intake and assessment processes;
 - meeting with clients and S2H/outreach workers to discuss housing options and preferences as needed;
 - compiling listings of current and upcoming suite availability;
 - liaising with and assessing referrals from supported housing partners.

 3. In consultation with management staff, participates in:
 - representing the S2H and the Housing Outreach programs in local and provincial initiatives involved in addressing homelessness;
 - developing and implementing strategies to promote Pacifica Housing services;
 - increasing community awareness of and support for safe affordable housing;
 - participating in related community based meetings, committees and groups regarding housing and support services for people experiencing homelessness and/or significant barriers to stable housing;
 - arranging special events.

 4. Performs other related duties, including:
 - assisting in negotiating specific arrangements with landlords to mitigate evictions and address damage claims;
 - coordinating move-out and suite remediation arrangements with outreach workers and landlords;
 - maintaining all relevant information and statistics including lists of current landlords housing S2H/outreach clients;
 - monitoring and completing all reporting obligations with relevant funders and community stakeholders.

QUALIFICATIONS (MINIMUM EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS):**Education:**

- A degree or diploma in a related field
- Conflict management/crisis prevention/negotiation training and/or demonstrated skills

Experience:

- A minimum of 3 years in a role with related responsibilities

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Demonstrated knowledge of the Residential Tenancy Act
- Demonstrated understanding of best practices in property management
- Demonstrated capacity to engage diverse populations in community based initiatives
- Demonstrated understanding of the impacts of addiction, mental health, homelessness and poverty
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with individuals living with multiple barriers to stable housing
- Demonstrated awareness and belief in the value of harm reduction practices
- Knowledge of local community resources
- Proficient in MS Office programs including Word, Outlook and Excel

Additional Criteria for Role:

- Completion of a Criminal Record Check through the Ministry of Justice is required
- First Aid Certification is required
- Must have valid driver's licence and access to a reliable vehicle with a minimum of \$2 million liability 'business class' insurance

Note: An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered.

BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES ASSIGNED TO THE ROLE:**Core Competencies**

Caring: Intermediate

Creative: Intermediate

Responsible: Intermediate

Role-Specific Competencies

Communication: Advanced

Relationship Building: Advanced

Decision Making: Intermediate

APPENDIX D | EXAMPLE OF A PROMOTIONAL BROCHURE: LANDLORD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IN OTTAWA, ONTARIO

OUR MAIN PARTNERS



Canadian Mental Health Association
Mental health for all



JohnHoward
SOCIETY OF ONTARIO



Mniwaašhin Lodge
INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTRE



Montfort Renaissance
soins infirmiers | services de santé
soins infirmiers | soins de santé



OPTIONS BYTOWN
Building community
Développer la communauté



Ottawa mission
more than a shelter



Tungasuvvingat Inuit



Wabano
L'Unité des services de santé



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The Landlord Partnership Program | Programme de partenariat de propriétaires



The Landlord Partnership Program

Bridging Business and Community

about us

The Landlord Partnership Program (LPP) runs in collaboration with the City of Ottawa and nine agencies and matches available housing vacancies to individuals who are on social assistance and facing some housing barriers.

why use us

PROFESSIONALISM

Our team consists of housing based case workers who support our clients throughout the tenancy for as long as needed. Our Housing Locators work hard to ensure your vacancies are filled with individuals you are comfortable with!

CONVENIENCE

We offer rent direct payments to our landlords through direct deposit or cheques.

The rent is split up in two forms of payment:

1. Social Assistance (Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program)
2. The City of Ottawa Housing Allowance

Both payments are made rent direct to our landlords to ensure rent is always paid in full and on time!



how we work + how we can help you



MEET

Our Housing Locator team meets with our landlords to ensure optimal matches. The Housing Locator views every unit prior to submitting it into the program's internal listing.



PARTNER

After meeting with our Housing Location team, your unit will be submitted into the program's internal listing. When a caseworker finds a client that may be a good fit for your unit, a viewing will be scheduled for you to meet with the client and the caseworker.



SUPPORT

The program strives to ensure the landlord, tenant and community are equally supported throughout the whole process.

APPENDIX E | EXAMPLE OF A HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: CMHA OTTAWA, OTTAWA, ON

Housing Program

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ottawa Branch has been afforded the opportunity to provide rental supplements to landlords who provide housing to CMHA clients. CMHA currently has housing rent supplement agreements with over 80 private landlords, which house close to 300 clients throughout the Ottawa area. CMHA also owns and operates 32 condominiums which are utilized by CMHA clients.

Program Overview

- 1 Clients pay a portion of the market rent and CMHA provides a supplement up to the full market rent of the unit. Example: if the rent is \$800.00/month and the client is receiving a disability payment of \$479.00/month towards housing, the client will pay \$479.00 to the landlord and CMHA will pay the landlord \$321.00/month. If the client is not receiving any financial assistance, the portion the client pays is equal to 30% of their gross monthly income.
- 2 CMHA can provide the landlord with the last month rent deposit.
- 3 CMHA will provide the client with funding to pay (in full) the client's utilities, e.g. heat, hydro.
- 4 If there damages or the client leaves the unit prematurely, CMHA may be able offer financial assistance to the landlord to offset costs incurred by the landlord.
- 5 Clients will receive CMHA services (until deemed no longer necessary) while in the rental unit, e.g. case management services.
- 6 If the client no longer requires CMHA services, the rent supplement will remain in place while the client remains in the unit.
- 7 If the client has been closed from CMHA services, but may require intervention or assessment, CMHA may be able to provide this service to help maintain the client's current stable housing environment.
- 8 The landlord has the opportunity to contact the CMHA housing branch if there are any questions, concerns or comments concerning the program, or if any issues arise from the client/tenant in the unit. The inquiries will be responded to with due diligence.
- 9 CMHA's policy is to match the client to the area and unit that best suits the situation. If the match is not the right one, CMHA will try and move the client to a more suitable unit.
- 10 The rent supplement agreement between the landlord and CMHA can be cancelled at anytime that is deemed suitable to either party.

CMHA's housing program has been very successful in housing their clientele. CMHA's housing program has a lower eviction and turnover rate than Ottawa's rental housing market. With the continued synergy and open communication with both the clientele and landlords alike, CMHA strives to provide the best service possible to all parties involved. For more information concerning CMHA's housing Program please contact the housing branch at 613-737-7791.

APPENDIX F | EXAMPLES OF LETTERS, EMAILS AND PHONE CONTACT SCRIPTS FOR LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION: STELLA'S CIRCLE AND FRONT STEP IN ST JOHN'S, NL

SAMPLE LETTER SENT TO AN ON-SITE LEASING AGENT AFTER A TELEPHONE CALL WITH A PROPERTY MANAGER; THE MEETING WAS ARRANGED DURING A COLD CALL:

Good Afternoon,

I met with (name removed) this morning and he provided me with your contact information. I'm a Stella's Circle, Supportive Housing employee who has been tasked with developing a network of landlords in the city who would be interested in partnering with us to provide housing to the community. We are a new team within Stella's Circle and offer supports to both landlord and tenant. If it's okay with you both, I would like to be able to contact you on a regular basis, perhaps monthly, to discuss any of your upcoming vacancies.

If you have any questions about our housing team, I may be contacted at this email address or by telephone at _____.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTER SENT TO A CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION AFTER A COLD CALL:

Good afternoon,

Thank-you for taking the time to speak with me yesterday morning about our housing initiative; I appreciate your willingness to send on some information about our team to your association members.

The Stella's Circle Supportive Housing Team is a new initiative of Stella's Circle and has been in operation since October 1, 2009. Our mandate is to house persons in our community who need help finding housing and may have had difficult housing histories, who may be under-housed, or living in unsatisfactory conditions. We hope to achieve this by developing relationships with landlords in the community who will partner with us to provide housing solutions for our community.

Support is offered to both the tenant and landlord. For example, our housing workers visit clients in their homes and can offer help in various areas, ranging from budgeting to cleaning to participating in recreation or leisure activities. We work with our clients to help them become good tenants. Additionally, the rent can be direct pay if the tenant is funded by income assistance or NL Housing. Clients that are employed would be responsible to set up their own method of rent payment.

For the landlord, we offer go-between services, if you have an issue with your tenant call us first and we will contact the tenant. We are also working on providing after hour services, by way of a

hotline for landlords to call. In the upcoming months we will also be offering Landlord workshops and education seminars.

If you would like to learn more about our services, I would be happy to meet with you. I can be reached at telephone number _____, or by email at _____.

Sincerely,

LETTER SENT TO A LANDLORD AFTER REPLYING TO A KIJJI AD. THIS LETTER OR A VARIATION OF IT WAS ALSO SENT TO REAL ESTATE AGENTS AND OTHER LANDLORDS IN THE COMMUNITY WHO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Thanks for your interest and reply!

We are a new initiative of Stella's Circle, since October 1, 2009, and our mandate is twofold, one part is to house persons in our community who need help finding housing and have had difficult housing experiences or histories; the other part is to develop a list of landlords in the community who may want to partner with us to find housing solutions for our community. We also assist persons who are under housed or living in unsatisfactory conditions.

Support is offered to both the tenant and the landlord. For example, our housing workers visit clients in their homes and can offer help on anything from budgeting to cleaning to participating in recreation or leisure activities. We work with our clients to help them become good tenants. Additionally, the rent can be direct pay if the tenant is funded by income assistance or NL Housing. Clients that are employed would be responsible to set up their own method of rent payment.

For the landlord we offer go-between services, if you have an issue with your tenant call us first and we will contact the tenant. We are also working on providing after hour services, by way of a hotline for landlords to call. In the upcoming months we will also be offering Landlord workshops and education seminars.

If you would like to learn more about our services, I would be happy to meet with you, I can be reached at telephone number _____.

Once again, thanks for your interest in our housing program.

SAMPLE OF ANOTHER AD RESPONSE:

Thank you so much for getting back to me, I know that a lot of people are looking for housing. I'm sure you received many enquiries. My interest in the unit was for Stella Circle clients. I am a Tenant Relations Specialist with Stella's Circle Supportive Housing team. Our team has been in operation since October 2009.

Would you be interested in learning about our housing support services? Briefly, we offer services and supports to both landlord and tenant. Additionally, rent and damage are direct pay and there will be an after-hours hotline for landlords within the next few months. We are only available during regular business hours right now.

I would be very happy tell you about our programs and may be reached at 738 5055 Monday to Friday or this email any time.

Warm regards,

SAMPLE RESPONSE TO AN AD IN PAPER/ONLINE AD:

Hi there, and thanks for responding to my email.

Yes, you are correct, that is what we do. I intended to say we direct-pay the damage deposit and also the monthly rent. Sorry about that!

For landlords, we are, for lack of a better description, a go-between should there be any issues around someone's tenancy. We would be your first point of contact for any complaints such as noise or any other issue that a landlord might have with their tenants.

We directly support our tenants in their housing, by visits to see how things are going or helping with budgeting etc. Our aim is to assist people to become good tenants. It's a very hands on approach, we have a Social Worker on our team, Housing Support Workers, (they provide the direct help) and two Tenant Relations Specialists who find the accommodations.

We have an immediate need for one bedroom or bachelor units, but also frequently need larger units.

I would be quite happy to answer any other questions you have.

Sincerely,

INITIAL CALL SCRIPT/GENERAL OUTLINE FOR PHONE CALLS TO PROPERTY MANAGERS, RESPONSES TO ONLINE OR OTHER POSTED ADS SUCH AS NEWSPAPERS OR ADS POSTED IN WINDOWS OR REFERRALS FROM ANOTHER LANDLORD:

Hello, I am calling about the apartment (indicate specific apartment) you have for rent, is this a good time, would you have a few minutes to chat?

(If yes) I am calling from a housing non-profit called _____. Are you familiar with our agency? (Give a brief outline of services in the community).

(If met with any resistance due to previous tenancy issues) Can you tell me a bit about those tenancies? It's good learning for me and other involved staff.

We have taken steps to respond to similar issues and we have supports in place that we offer to both the landlord and the tenants.

(If previous issues were financial) We have direct pay options available.

(If there were other types of tenancy issues like cleanliness, health or issues with neighbors). We have housing supports that we offer to both the tenant and the landlord to address these types of issues.

(If the landlord wants to know what the prospective tenant "has") With us, it's more about the supports a tenant needs to live on their own, not a diagnosis. A diagnosis is not always a reliable indicator of a person's ability to live on their own. Our Social Workers' role is to determine the supports required for each individual client or prospective tenant and what that might look like once they have secured housing.

(If they do not immediately grant a meeting or viewing) May I keep your number and call back at a later date?

APPENDIX G | EXAMPLE OF A SALES CALL GUIDE: LANDLORD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IN OTTAWA, ON

BEFORE THE CALL

- Review the landlord or property manager's name(s) and any special details pertaining to the property.
- Review any past history between the landlord or property manager and the program. Have program participants previously been housed with this landlord or property manager? How did it go?
- Review priorities for the call. What are you asking for? (e.g. provide information, request a meeting, schedule a viewing)

DURING THE CALL

- Direct the call to the appropriate person. Make sure that you are connecting with a landlord or property manager directly (rather than a receptionist who may be quick to dismiss sales calls).
- Provide a clear introduction. "Hello, my name is _____ and I work for (agency/program). I specialize in creating sustainable tenancies in the private rental sector for people who are accessing Ottawa's shelter services."
- Explain the program benefits. Outline key benefits like pre-screened tenants, long-term supports, rent direct payments, and home visits.
- Highlight successes. "Since the program's start in 2008 we have successfully housed over 170 tenants with a 95% success rate in sustainable tenancies."
- Navigate common roadblocks.
 - **Roadblock:** "I had a bad experience."

Response: Recognize the experience before moving on to other points. "I'm sorry to hear you've had a bad experience in the past and I hope you don't think your experience is indicative of all Housing First clients." Try to find out more about the bad experience so you know how to address their concerns. Bad experiences can happen with any tenant but are less likely to happen with one who has ongoing support.
 - **Roadblock:** "I'm worried they'll disrupt other tenants."

Response: "I remain hopeful that most clients, perhaps with some coaching, can address conflicts with their neighbours on their own, but I appreciate that sometimes a mediator/facilitator will be necessary. This is one of the reasons why Case managers will be checking in with landlords/property managers when conducting a home visit to address any potential concerns sooner rather than later."

- **Roadblock:** “What if I don’t get my money on time?”

Response: “Payments are provided on a monthly basis through direct deposit. Meaning, payments do not go through the tenant prior to being provided to the landlord, but are instead streamlined directly into the landlord’s account.”

- **Roadblock:** “What if the unit gets damaged?”

Response: “Because our case managers conduct weekly home visits, potential problems such as damages can often be prevented. If damage does occur, we will work with the tenant and the landlord to set up a payment plan that everyone is comfortable with.”

- **Ask for what you want.** “I would like to set up a meeting with you, in person, to discuss the program and how it can benefit you in more detail.”
- **Schedule.** Schedule the meeting and take down any contact information. Confirm the meeting 24 hours in advance via email.

APPENDIX H | EXAMPLE OF A LANDLORD NEWSLETTER: CITY OF ST. JOHN'S, NL

Link <http://conta.cc/2mfZzSQ>



**New
Lease**

LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES



Information Session for Landlords
 happening on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 from 9-10:30am
 at the Newfoundland & Labrador Housing & Homelessness Network
 (NLHNN) Learning Centre

- Janet Meaney will present information on the Front Step Program (a Housing First program of Stella's Circle, Choices for Youth and End Homelessness St. John's).
- Michelle Marley with Newfoundland Power's takeCHARGE program will present information on their residential rebates and programs: <http://takechargenl.ca/residential/>

[PLEASE CLICK HERE TO REGISTER.](#)



HOUSING FIRST 101/LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT

Presentation made by Wally Czech (with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness) on November 22, 2016 during the City's Landlord Engagement Forum. [Click here for presentation.](#)

Missed this presentation in November?

End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ) is bringing Wally Czech back next week:

**HOUSING FIRST 101
COMMUNITY
PRESENTATION**

TOPIC
This presentation will provide insight into the basic core principles of Housing First and why it is the most effective method of addressing chronic homelessness. The session will conclude with an in-depth Q&A period.

WHEN
March 13, 2017, 8:30AM - 12:00 noon

WHERE
The Gathering Place Auditorium, 172 Military Rd

PRESENTER
Wally Czech, Director of Training, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH)

WHO SHOULD ATTEND
Anyone and everyone with interest in gaining a basic understanding of Housing First and what it means to have it in their community. Government officials, municipal officials, other members of community organizations, and the general public and all welcome and encouraged to attend.

For more info, contact:
Laura Winters, System Planner
End Homelessness St. John's
lwinters@stjohns.ca
709.725.6089

END
HOMELESSNESS
ST. JOHN'S

WHEN: March 13, 2017, 8:30AM – 12:00 noon

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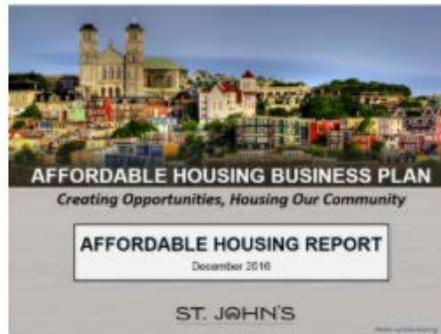
Did you know?

In February, 2017, the City of St. John's released their

AFFORDABLE HOUSING REPORT

Did you know?

In February, 2017, the City of St. John's released their
AFFORDABLE HOUSING REPORT



[Click here to view the Affordable Housing Report.](#)



New Lease: The newsletter for Landlords, Property Managers and others with an interest in helping people achieve their dream of affordable housing in the City of St. John's.

You can unsubscribe anytime by using the link below.

ST. JOHN'S

APPENDIX I | EXAMPLE OF A LANDLORD SATISFACTION SURVEY HOME BASE HOUSING: CITY OF KINGSTON, ON

Do you feel the Housing Liaison Worker responds to questions in a timely and satisfactory manner?

No Somewhat no somewhat yes Yes

Comments:

Do you feel the Case Managers assigned to assist tenants respond in a timely and satisfactory manner?

No Somewhat no somewhat yes Yes

Comments:

If applicable, when damages have been caused by Housing First tenants, please rate your satisfaction with the process of being reimbursed for repairs.

Not satisfied Somewhat satisfied Satisfied Very satisfied

Comments:

Do you receive the support you expected to receive when you first partnered with the Housing First Rent Supplement Program?

No Somewhat no Somewhat yes Yes

Comments:

Rate the amount of time spent dealing with Housing First tenant issues in comparison to your other tenants.

Less time

About the same

A bit more time

More time

Comments:

Please check which of the following were reason(s) you agreed to partner with the Housing First Rent Supplement Program.

- Rent Supplement direct payments
- Case Management support for tenants
- Housing Liaison support for landlords
- Desire to assist those most in need in your community

Other:

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the Housing First Program.

Not satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Satisfied

Very satisfied

Comments:

Would you recommend the Housing First Rent Supplement Program to other landlords?

No

Not sure

Maybe

Yes

Comments:

APPENDIX J - EXAMPLE OF AN ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT: HOME BASE HOUSING, CITY OF KINGSTON, ON

SUMMARY OF LANDLORD RECRUITMENT FOR HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM

August 2016

Overview

In early 2015, a number of organizations began to provide new services designed to reduce homelessness. The Housing First Case Management service is intended to provide homeless individuals and families with a case manager who will assist them to find and maintain a place to live. One aspect of this new service was an initiative to recruit landlords who would enter into an agreement to allow their apartments to be rented by clients of the program.

Landlords are able to collect the usual rent through a rent supplement subsidy and can call the case manager if there are any difficulties that arise with the tenancy. There is also a provision that landlords can apply for modest financial compensation in the event that there are damages to their rental unit. The recruitment and relationship building with landlords is carried out by the “Housing Liaison Worker” who works at Home Base Housing.

This report provides a summary of landlord recruitment as well as the results of a satisfaction survey distributed to the landlords that participated in the rent supplement program.

Recruitment

In the first fifteen months of the program, 127 formerly homeless households were housed through the Housing First Case Management Program.

- 10 of the 127 households moved to subsidized accommodations through regular rent geared-to-income (RGI) housing providers.
- 46 households moved to private sector rental housing and paid market rent
- 68 of the 127 households who were housed received a rent supplement
- 12 landlords entered into the rent supplement agreements
- 4 of the 12 rent supplement landlords provided 55 (81%) of the rent supplement apartments
- 2 of the 4 rent supplement landlords provided 45 (66%) of the rent supplement apartments

Rent Supplement Landlord Satisfaction Survey

In July 2016, a survey was mailed to 11 of the 12 landlords who participated in the rent supplement program to determine their level of satisfaction with the program. Home Base was not included in the survey although it provided 21% of the overall rent supplement apartments. The remaining landlords were provided a self-addressed return envelope addressed to the Executive Director of Home Base. 7 of the 11 surveys were returned.

Summary

Landlord recruitment for rent supplement assisted apartments has gone well. It is somewhat concerning that two landlords (Home Base Housing and Landlord A) have provided 66% of the rent supplement apartments. Without the participation of these two landlords, the success of finding housing placements for clients would have been significantly reduced.

All landlords who responded to the survey were very satisfied with the role and assistance of the Housing Liaison Worker. They are pleased with the HLW and appreciate Jay's availability, his promptness and follow through. The majority of landlords feel that they are receiving the support that they expected they would. This is clearly an important role for the Housing First program.

Some concerns were noted regarding case managers - their frequency of visits to clients in their homes and their overall ability to engage clients to make positive changes to support their tenancy. Whilst Case Managers should ensure regular visits are being paid and everything is being done to ensure a successful tenancy, there are always limits to their abilities. Perhaps educating landlords as to the limitations of the role of the case manager would ensure understanding of those limitations. It is also recommended that this information be shared with Case Managers who work directly with clients. HBH and AMHS hold quarterly meetings together and this venue would allow for an open discussion about what barriers Case Managers face when engaging clients and how to overcome these.

Only three of the seven landlords stated that they would recommend the program to other landlords. Why is this the case? The concerns are related to landlords believing that the tenant population referred through the Housing First Program require more attention than other tenants and dissatisfaction with the process for claiming reimbursement for damages to the rental units. The number of damage claims is indicative of the many Housing First tenants needing more attention from landlords than other tenants. Three of five landlords who have made claims for damages are not satisfied with the process.

There is not yet a Service Standard for damage claims. This one area has caused a good deal of frustration/dissatisfaction for landlords, the Housing Liaison Worker and, likely, City staff. The current expectations around making claims are not reasonable and needs some new thinking.

This survey is a baseline and it is recommended that further surveys be distributed on a regular basis to ensure the feedback and input of Landlords is being heard.

Recommendations

- Discuss with Case Managers from AMHS-KFLA and HBH the noted concerns from landlords.
- Meet with City of Kingston to discuss issues with current Damage Protocol and work to address concerns.
- Ensure Case Managers maintain contact with the landlords with whom their clients are housed.
- Educate landlords more on HF Program, processes, etc.
- Continue to provide opportunity for Landlords to provide feedback on the HF Program