

Is your organization and / or local Continuum of Care looking to decrease the length of time that households experience homelessness before they obtain their own rental unit?

The main barrier to achieving this goal is the lack of landlords that will agree to rent to unhoused households that often have multiple other barriers for which landlords will not consider them as viable tenants. Well, the good news is that we have evidence that housing location and landlord engagement strategies work to persuade landlords to rent to tenants with multiple barriers to housing served through homelessness assistance programs, reducing the length of time a family is unhoused.

This toolkit is intended to support the work of homelessness crisis response systems looking to establish and/or expand their community-wide housing location infrastructure and landlord engagement strategies.

The rental market has changed dramatically in recent years and many homelessness assistance programs are experiencing greater challenges in assisting their clients in making quick connections to their new home.

- All communities in Pennsylvania have seen increases in demand for rental housing causing rents to rise and landlords to be stricter in screening.
- A Housing Alliance survey of 660 landlords found that over 70% landlords will not rent to tenants with past evictions, no income and/or involvement with the criminal justice system.
- The same survey found landlords, especially smaller mom-and-pops, are struggling to meet their own financial obligations and are struggling with increased maintenance and repair costs.

However, knowing a landlord's business cost drivers can help identify proven strategies, like landlord incentives, which can be implemented to persuade landlords to work with your organization and assistance programs.

- The Housing Alliance asked landlords the circumstances that they would agree to lower their screening practices and our survey found that over two-thirds of landlords showed a willingness to work with programs and adjust screening

practices if given their preferred landlord incentive¹ such as risk mitigation funds and sign-on bonuses.

- **A Housing Alliance evaluation of three landlord incentive pilots found that families experiencing homelessness moved into their own homes faster after programs started offering landlord incentives.**

Instituting a broad array of resources for housing location infrastructure and landlord engagement strategies will help those who fell on hard times get back on their feet while meeting the business needs of landlords wanting to help their community. **In addition, homelessness service systems will be able to demonstrate an increase in exits from the homelessness system to permanent housing and lower rates of people experiencing homelessness again.** This will help communities be more competitive for more HUD funding. More simply put, better outcomes can result in more funding to help solve homelessness.

Table of Contents

Housing Location Infrastructure

- [Landlord Engagement in a Post-Pandemic Rental Market: What Is and Is Not Working](#)
- [Sample Housing Locater Job Description](#)
- [Landlord and Unit Tracking Template](#)

Funding Housing Location and Landlord Engagement

- [Landlord Engagement Plan Template & Example Plan](#)
- [Landlord Engagement Virtual Summit: Leveraging Funding Sources for Housing Solutions](#)

The Landlord Engagement Cycle

- [Sample Landlord Survey](#)
- [Sample Landlord Focus Group Guide](#)
- [Housing Locater Summit Part 1 & Part 2](#)

Benefits of Landlord Incentives

- [Landlord Attitudes on Homelessness Assistance Programs](#)
- [Bringing Landlords to the Table Lessons Learned from Landlord Incentive Pilots in Three Communities](#)
- Incentive fact sheets
 - [Barrier Removal Payments](#)
 - [Vacancy Payments](#)
 - [Recruitment/Retention Bonus](#)
 - [Menu of Incentives](#)
- [Incentives for Landlords to Rent to Lower Income Households](#)

Marketing Programs to Landlords

- [Landlord-Tenant-Case Manager Communication Agreement](#)

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¹ Additional landlord incentives include home repair funds, vacancy payments, housing locators, and landlord focused information resources

