

Incentives For Landlords to Rent to Households Being Served Through Homelessness Assistance Programs



Menu of Incentives

The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania is publishing this document as a discussion guide for increasing partnerships with and providing incentives for landlords to rent to households overcoming homelessness.

WHY

The rental housing market is competitive. There are more renters in need of a place to live and rent than there are rental units affordable to them.

Therefore, landlords can screen out tenants, making it more difficult for those that have experienced homelessness that often have barriers such as poor credit, no income, income less than three times the rent, past evictions, and having a criminal record.

Homelessness assistance programs can use landlord incentives to help retain landlords and attract new landlords in renting to lower income individuals and families.

These incentives can offset the potential or perceived added time and costs of renting to households overcoming homelessness that may be otherwise screened out by a landlord due to their little to no income, poor rental history, and/or criminal history.

WHAT

Landlords are very diverse in scale and operations and by offering a variety of incentives, programs can be better positioned in negotiating an arrangement to suite the individual landlord business needs.

Using a combination of financial incentives sign-on bonuses and repair funds that can help get a unit to pass inspection or to off-set cost resulting from damage caused by client allow programs to be nimble in responding to landlord needs at any point in the rental relationship with the client.

WHO

This menu is further strengthened when there is a housing locator or landlord liaison to serve as the single point of contact for landlords and helps them connect to the needed incentive in a timely manner.

Case Study

Lehigh Valley, PA

The Lehigh Valley Regional Homeless Advisory Board (LVRHAB) landlord incentive program covers Lehigh and Northampton counties. The LVRHAB is a collaborative of 50 housing assistance providers and other key stakeholders working to end homelessness in the Lehigh Valley. As part of their community strategy to end homelessness, the RHAB has prioritized a wholistic landlord engagement approach that includes having dedicated housing locaters, a shared community list of landlords and known unit openings, and a menu of financial incentives that provides repair funding during client move in as well as if something happens during the client's tenancy.

Menu of Landlord Incentives

Sign on Bonus- \$1,000 for first unit, second unit \$500, third unit \$250 and each additional unit.

Repair Funds- Up to \$2,500 can be used to:

- bring a unit up to code with the agreement to rent the unit to LVRHAB affiliated program clients; or
- to pay for repairs if the tenant damages the unit.

In addition, there is a landlord engagement committee that meets meet biweekly. This committee is responsible for creating and maintaining an active list of landlords and current unit vacancies as well as review and approve requests for repair funds.

Michele Albright, Director of Emergency Services & Housing for Valley Youth House and Chair for LVRHAB Landlord Engagement Committee shared, "The benefit of offering multiple and flexible financial incentives for landlords is that it allows prospective renters with one or more barriers to compete in an extremely competitive rental market. This creates a win-win situation for both landlords and tenants. Tenants have access to safe, affordable housing while landlords have access to financial incentives."

The Housing Alliance is a statewide coalition working to provide leadership and a common voice for policies, practices, and resources to ensure that all Pennsylvanians, especially those with low incomes, have access to safe, decent, and affordable homes.

We promote common-sense solutions to balance PA's housing market and increase the supply of safe, decent homes for people who have low incomes.