

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



Recruitment and /or Retention Bonus

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

Recruitment bonuses, also commonly referred to as a sign-on bonus, are a specific type of financial incentive that compensates landlords who may be new to working with a homelessness assistance program or starting to work with a program after an extended break.

In some instances, recruitment bonuses can be expanded to also compensate landlords who refer a fellow landlord to work with a housing assistance program for the first time.

Retention bonus, are a financial incentive that will compensate a landlord for agreeing to rent more than one unit to a qualifying tenant that is being supported through the homelessness service system.

WHO

The bonus payments are made directly to a landlord, usually at the point of lease up. Recruitment and retention bonuses are meant to financially incentivize landlords to rent to households experiencing homelessness and would likely be denied under the landlord's existing screening criteria.

Case Study

Bucks County, PA

Bucks County Housing Link offers the Bonus for Bucks Program. This program has both a signing and referral bonus. Landlords receive a payment equal to one month's rent for signing a one-year lease with households experiencing homelessness. There is also an additional bonus called a "finder's fee" of \$2,000 for landlords who successfully recruit other landlords to work with households experiencing homelessness and being served through the Housing Link.

According to Kendra Transue, Supervisor of Housing Location at Bucks Community Opportunity Council, "The impact the Bonus for Bucks Landlords Incentive Program has had has been noteworthy. It has opened up the doors to many new relationships with landlords and realtors. This incentive shows our investment in the success of not only the program participants but also our partner landlords and realtors. The program is opening new conversations with new community members and opening doors to end homelessness."

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.