

Landlord Engagement and Incentive Strategies

Connor Goggans, Sr. Real Estate Project Manager
Alexi Millard, Landlord Engagement Coordinator
Milwaukee County Housing Services



Introduction

- Landlord Engagement Coordination position 1st fulfilled in 2021 (Connor)
- Expanded and refilled in May 2022 (Alexi)
- Housing Navigation Team added in September 2023
- What makes us unique:
 - Government agency – within Milwaukee County DHHS
 - Housing Authority
 - CoC rent assistance
 - Entitlement grantee
 - Team – in-house:
 - Development
 - Landlord engagement
 - Housing navigation: services CoC & HCV (other PHA's, too)



Goals & Main Components

- Goals
 - Priority #1: unsheltered homelessness
 - More rent assistance participant choice
 - More landlord participation & better landlord retainment
 - Speedier housing process & more effective housing navigation
 - Increased housing stability
 - Improved landlord relationships and satisfaction
- Main components
 - Landlord recruitment & outreach
 - Customer service
 - Technology
 - Marketing
 - Training
 - Monetary incentives
 - Partnerships
 - Conflict resolution



Market & Development Strategy

- Milwaukee area 3rd most competitive market in August 2023 (CoStar Analytics); 2nd most competitive in start of 2024 (Yardi Matrix data)
 - Driven by lack of units, decreasing household size, & undersupply of studio & 1 BR units
- Milwaukee are 2nd highest rate of rising rents in November 2023
- Those exiting homelessness with rent assistance & little to no income, and challenging backgrounds most impacted



Customer Service

- Acknowledge and address landlord concerns - respond to inquiries quickly as possible
- Don't overlook allowable and feasible administrative flexibilities
- Develop genuine, individualized and personal relationships
- If possible, delegate a specific position(s) or party(ies) for assisting landlords
- Keep contact and vacancy lists
 - Regular follow-up: hot, warm, & cold lists – measure changes between them
- Mutual lease terminations, link tenants to services, & hold staffings when needed
- Account for preferences, screening criteria, etc. for more effective housing navigation
 - Tenant matching



Technology

- Paperless options: fillable forms & electronic signatures
- Direct deposit/quick payments
- Landlord-facing/friendly content & portal
 - Allow self-service for participants and landlords
 - Automate rent assistance program duties and functions
- Rental comparables software for rent reasonableness
- Photo evidence for curing Non-Life Threatening HQS issues & most damage mitigation claims



Marketing

- Rent assistance programs
- Agency (Public Housing Authority or otherwise), in general
- Landlord Incentives Fostering Tenancies (“LIFT”)
- Success stories & testimonials
 - Examples of landlord portfolio stability & scaling
 - Client success



Training

- Participant
 - Briefings/Intakes – how can these be made more effective?
 - Supplemental tenant trainings can be helpful (certificate programs)
- Case management & internal staff
 - Opportunities for case management agencies and internal staff to ask rent assistance program staff questions, seek clarification about them, etc.
- Landlords and Property Managers
 - Utilize pre-existing programs: Fair Housing, Boot Camps, etc.
 - Present to local networks about rent assistance and incentive programs



Monetary Incentives

- Determine your local needs by speaking with your local leaders in rentals/real estate community
- Milwaukee County
 - LIFT – damage mitigation fund
 - Eviction Prevention Program
 - Master leasing
 - Fiscal agent contracts – flexible funding
 - Housing Mobility Grant – admin. and incentives (coming soon)
 - CoC: limited (post-tenancy) damage & vacancy loss reimbursement, and security deposits
 - Development subsidy
 - PBV & general unit commitments, SLFRF (“ARPA”), HOME, CPF, tax levy (limited), CDBG (limited), Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (“PRO Housing”)?
- Wish list: vacancy mitigation, Accelerated Moving Events, unit holdover agreements, general obligation bond issuance, & private-market low-interest loan fund



Current funding sources

- Local government tax levy
 - EPP
 - LIFT – damage mitigation
 - Fiscal agent contracts – flexible funding
 - Limited Landlord Engagement team admin.
- HUD Housing Mobility Grant
- HCV/EHV/PBV
- CoC RRH & TBRA
- ESG
- HOME
- SLFRF (“ARPA”)
- ERA



Advocating for Local Government Funding

- Market conditions – data and surveys
- Landlord concerns & perceptions & program (regulatory and administrative) limitations
- Preexisting resources: rent assistance programs, incentives
- Expert and HUD recommendations
- Current gaps (also highlight consequences)
- Nexus of lowest-hanging-fruit and next most effective strategy needing funding
 - Calculate/forecast based on data



Partnerships

- Milwaukee County Landlord Advisory Committee
- Current landlords (“hot list”)
- Real estate networks & Apartment Associations
- Continuum of Care programs
- Public Housing Authorities
- Supportive Service providers
- Local government
- Non-governmental organizations



Discussion





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