Working with Landlords: Engagement, Fair Housing/Landlord-Tenant Law, and the Balance of Both

Webinar | November 19, 2014
Today’s Objectives

- Learn best practices to engaging and retaining private landlords, including in tight rental markets
- Learn to identify common fair housing violations and approaches to supporting families and working with landlords
- Increase awareness of existing statewide resources for fair housing and tenant rights services/training
- Connect to others in the field for peer learning
Presenters

- **Becky Armbruster**
  - Journey Home Housing Advocate, Solid Ground

- **Faith Simonelli**
  - Fair Housing & Housing Program Manager, VOA Dispute Resolution Center

- **Jason Simon**
  - Fair Housing Counselor, VOA Dispute Resolution Center
Logistics

- Webinar will last 90 minutes
- Approx. 20 minutes are reserved at the end for Q&A
- Attendees can pose questions at any time through the “Question” function found in the GoToWebinar toolbar
- Attendees are muted due to the high number of participants
- Please fill out the short evaluation that will be available at the end of the webinar
Rapid Re-Housing & Private Landlords

- RRH is...
  ...moving people experiencing homelessness into their own permanent housing quickly

- This means...
  ...reliance on landlords to rent to these families
Challenges and Opportunities

- Housing programs vs. private market
  - Limited vouchers/units
  - Long wait lists
  - Entry criteria
  - Vacancy rates
  - Rental costs
  - Prejudiced landlords
Phases of Rapid Re-Housing

- Coordinated Entry
  - Assessment
  - Matching

Leasing Up
- Subsidized Move-In Costs
- Goal Setting
- Landlord Connection
- Budgeting
- Housing Search

Stabilizing
- Subsidized Rent
- Goal Monitoring
- Budgeting
- Employment
- Referrals

Retaining
- Landlord Relationship Mgmt.
- Increased Income

Month 1

Months 2-6

Months 7-12
RRH Providers: Food for Thought

- Approach to leasing-up phase of RRH
- Staffing structures, roles and skills sets
- Leverage points
LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT

Becky Armbruster
Housing Advocate at Solid Ground
THE TEAM APPROACH

- Case Managers and Housing Advocates
- The Pros
- The Cons
TIPS AND TOOLS FOR FAMILIES

- Tricks, tips, bells and whistles
- Family strengths are your greatest tool
- “Rapid” isn’t always quick
- Luck

"AS YOUR LANDLORD I ONLY HAVE ONE RULE, NO PETS!"
TYPES OF LANDLORDS

- Private Owner
- Property Management Co. or Real Estate Agency
THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LANDLORD ENGAGEMENT

- Speed
- Money
- Reassurance
- The carrot
- Landlord Liaison Project
- Face-to-Face interactions
RETAINING LANDLORDS

- Being available, no matter what
- Breakasts, events
- Re-engage
**SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR CLIENTS**

**Things that are helpful to have handy when you call and questions to ask:**

- Is the advertised rental still available?
  - If the answer is yes, ask for details on the unit such as bedroom size, price, and if water/sewer/garbage are included.
  - Ask about amenities that are important to you (if it’s close to a bus line, if it has a washer and dryer, etc.)

- What would be an automatic denial of an application?
  - If you have a criminal history, ask how far they check back.
  - If you have eviction history, ask how far they check back.

- Tell them that you’re working with a program that can pay your move in costs and a subsidy as discussed. If they need a holding fee while they’re waiting for approval, we can pay it. Then give them my name, phone number, and email. If you are meeting them in person, feel free to give them one of the business cards that I gave you.

- Call me right away if you see anything you’re interested in and if you want me to call. If you get my voicemail, then leave me the name and number of the landlord.
HELPFUL SITES

• craigslist.com
• padmapper.com
• housingsearchNW.org
• aptfinder.org
• rentals.com
• Support systems already in place
Fair Housing & Landlord-Tenant
Meet Dispute Resolution

Faith Simonelli – Fair Housing & Housing Program Manager
Jason Simon – Fair Housing Counselor
## Conflict is Human

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructive</th>
<th>Destructive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(without hostility, with a commitment to effective resolution)</td>
<td>(Behaviors and actions that result in increased antagonism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Fear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well being</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Win-Win Solutions</td>
<td>Broken relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Resentment builds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepening of Relationship</td>
<td>No Trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Bridging the gap between differing experiences, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and *interests*.

My wants

How I feel

What I value

Your wants

How you feel

What you value

Common Ground
Dispute Resolution

Information

Education

Resources
• **Shelter is a Basic Need**
  – Appreciate inherent power dynamics

• **Landlord-Tenant Business Relationships**
  – Identify possible shared interests
    • Rent payments = Mortgage payments
    • Typical repairs made now = Fewer expensive repairs made later
  – **Lease**
    • Understand terms and conditions
    • Document in writing
• Develop Healthy Housing Provider Relationships
  – Nonverbal
    • Handshake, eye contact...
  – Verbal
    • Feeling statements, open ended questions
  – Writing
    • Paper, email, text
• Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RCW 59.18)
  – Rights
  – Expectations
  – Responsibilities
• Knowledge is Power
  – The more landlords and tenants know, the easier it is for both to hold each other accountable
• Enforcement?
• Unlawful Detainer Action
  – Noncompliance with written notice + legal action
    • 3 Day Pay or Vacate
    • 3 Day Nuisance
    • 10 Day Comply or Vacate
    • 20 End of Tenancy
• **Common Ground**
  
  – Costly for Landlord
    
    • Legal expenses
    
    • Vacant unit
  
  – Costly for Tenant
    
    • Possible Homelessness
    
    • Future Housing
  
  – Negotiate
    
    • Shared interests creates an opportunity to negotiate (e.g. repayment plan)
• Fair Housing is the right of all people to be free from discrimination in the rental, sale, or financings of housing
  – Washington State Law Against Discrimination (RCW 49.60)
  – Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
  – Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968
Federal & State Wide Protected Classes

- Sex
- Race
- Color
- Disability
- Marital Status
- Familial Status
- Religion / Creed
- National Origin / Ancestry
- Veteran & Military Status
- Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

Association

- *Check with local jurisdiction for additional protected classes
Types of Unlawful Discrimination

- Specific Intent (e.g. advertisements)
- Different Treatment (e.g. failure to rent)
- Disparate Impact (e.g. housing policies)
- Harassment
- Failure to Accommodate & Allow Reasonable Modification
- Retaliation
• Common Violation Concerns Voiced (Trends)
  – Reasonable Accommodation / Modification
    • Service Animal
  – Families with Children
    • Policies
  – ESL
    • Deposits, Rates, etc.
• Unlawful Detainer Actions
  – 10 day comply or vacate given and not complied with
  – Landlord files unlawful detainer action in court
  – Tenant feels that notice and court filing are the consequence of different treatment
  – Tenant files complaint with WSHRC
• Volunteers of America Dispute Resolution Center
  – Information
  – Education
  – Counseling
  – 425-339-1335
Resources

• Housing & Urban Development
  – 206-220-5170
• Washington State Human Rights Commission
  – 360-753-6770
• King County Office of Civil Rights
  – 206-263-2446
• Seattle Office for Civil Rights
  – 206-684-4500
• Tacoma Human Rights
  – 253-591-5151
• Northwest Fair Housing Alliance
  – 509-325-2665
• Fair Housing Center of Washington
  – 253-274-9523
More Resources

- HUD Resources: www.kingcounty.gov/exec/CivilRights/FH/HUDresources.aspx


Help Us Learn!

Why does Building Changes evaluate this webinar with a survey?

1. Survey developed based on training objectives
2. Participants take survey
3. Results interpreted by Building Changes staff
4. Compiled report is shared and discussed with stakeholders
5. Findings inform future trainings, technical assistance, and capacity building

Survey Link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8FSYNX9
Contact Information

Becky Armbruster  
Solid Ground  
BeckyA@solid-ground.org

Emily Mirra  
Building Changes  
Emily.Mirra@BuildingChanges.org

Faith Simonelli  
VOA Dispute Resolution Center  
fsimonelli@voaww.org

Jason Simon  
VOA Dispute Resolution Center  
jsimon@voaww.org