Engaging Landlords to Serve Vulnerable Populations

October 2nd and 4th, 2018
Who are we?

- Presented by Collaborative Solutions Inc.
  - Crystal Pope
  - Mande Ellison-Weed

- Funding for this project is provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Rural Capacity Building Program.
What is Collaborative Solutions?

Collaborative Solutions, Inc. (CS):

- A nonprofit organization based in Birmingham, AL that specializes in community and organizational development strategies to improve the lives of low-income and vulnerable persons.
- CS offers technical assistance, organizational capacity development, leadership development, community organization, local and statewide advocacy for special needs populations, and research and evaluation services to communities and organizations.
- CS’ program areas focus on a variety of vulnerable populations, including HIV/AIDS, homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence.
What is the Rural Supportive Housing Initiative?

The Rural Supportive Housing Initiative (RSHI) was developed in response to a need for capacity development of housing and supportive service providers in rural communities so that they could better meet the need of vulnerable populations for safe affordable housing and supportive services needed to maintain stability.
Contact Information

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- More information about RSHI and CS is available at csi.elevate.commppartners.com.
Logistics/Housekeeping

- Resource materials
  - PPT
  - Handouts
- Activities
- Questions (the “Parking Lot”)
- Restrooms and telephones
  - Please silence or turn off cell phones.
## Agenda

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<th>Session 1: Successfully Marketing Your Program</th>
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<td>Break</td>
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<td>Session 2: Landlord Engagement &amp; Tenant Readiness</td>
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<td>Lunch (on your own)</td>
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<td>Session 3: The CM-Tenant-Landlord Relationship</td>
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<td>Break</td>
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<td>Session 4: Eviction Prevention</td>
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<td>Wrap up and Evaluation</td>
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Learning Objectives

- Increase knowledge about marketing your program to landlords and community networking;
- Learn how to effectively engage landlords;
- Identify strategies for strong tenant-case manager-landlord relationships and good communication;
- Develop strategies for improved relationships with landlords and property managers; and
- Strengthen eviction prevention techniques.
Who are you?

- Name
- What is your role at the organization?
  - Executive Director
  - Case Manager
  - Another position
- What do you hope to learn from this training?
Module 1

Understanding Landlords & Successfully Marketing Your Program
Understanding Landlords

- Rental housing is a business
- They are looking to reduce risk
- Maximize return on investment
- Small landlords are the largest supplier of affordable housing in the country
Four Things Landlords Want

- Good neighbor
- Property Care
- Rent Paid on Time
- Long-term Renter
Why market your program?

- In many ways, you are “selling a product” in the open market. You have to convince property owners that your “product” will meet their needs and address their concerns.
- Marketing the program is one of the best tools to use in developing a pool of landlords and management companies who are willing to rent directly to your clients.
Who do you market to?

- “Mom and Pop” landlords
- Property management organizations
- Other service providers
How do you market your program?

- Flyers
- Ads in local newspapers
- Social Media
- Host a landlord event
- Cold calling
- Direct mail
- Attend Health Fairs - host a table
How do you market your program?

- Create a Landlord Newsletter
- Have an Open House at your agency and highlight your housing program
- 5 Minute Mission Moments
- Direct mail to local real estate agencies.
Hosting a Landlord Event

- MUST HAVE FOOD!
- Intentionally recognize landlords who are participating. (Everyone loves a prize!)
- Ask a successful client to present at the event.
- Ask questions of those who attend and BE READY to answer!
Leave no stone unturned…

- Attend local meetings such as:
  - Faith Communities
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - County Commission Meetings
  - Supportive Service Meetings
  - Rotary Clubs
  - Others?
- KEEP SHOWING UP!!!
Marketing Toolbox

- Agency Brochure
- Program Brochure
- One-page informational handouts or fact sheets
- Letters explaining the program or agency
- Client Success Stories
- Testimonial letters from other landlords who have partnered and benefitted from the experience
- Business Cards
What’s in it for Landlords?

Never forget the most important thing!!!
What’s in it for Landlords?

Emphasizing the Win/Win

- Landlord/Tenant Education Class (pay rent, keep your unit clean, be a good neighbor)
- Protective Payee Services
- Budgeting Services
- Lease Addendum
- Additional Housing Support to address housing/lease issues
- Tenant Home Visits
- Finder Service—your program can be a go-to source for filling housing vacancies
Benefits to Landlords

- Participation in ending homelessness
- Communication and introduction to the potential tenant
- Of course, money
- Another party in the transaction
- Someone to help things end well
Rules of Engagement

- When a program is launched, there should be a written strategy of how to engage landlords best suited to the population. Ongoing ties to the participant.
- Landlords should know everything they’re agreeing to.
- Landlords deserve an answer every time.
Finding Homes for Clients

- In each of your service areas, some subsidized housing units may exist – many of these are nice apartment complexes that offer lots of amenities for tenants.
- It is our understanding that many agencies either don’t know about or are not talking with these complexes to find out what housing is available and how to help clients access these units.
Resource Development

- List of affordable housing
- List of availability in various housing programs
  - Rapid Rehousing
  - Permanent Supportive Housing
  - Population-specific Housing
  - Housing Authority Vouchers
- Landlord Engagement/Recruitment toolkit
Step 1

- Learn about the existing units in your service area.
- Make contact with the property managers and landlords and introduce yourselves/agency.
  - Property managers are very conscious of two things:
    - Vacant units: vacant units generate $0 – complexes make money when there are tenants in all of their units.
    - Fair housing: fair housing is a big deal and property managers have to affirmatively further fair housing.
Step 2

- Know the rules!
- The following issues can make a potential tenant ineligible:
  - Legal history
  - Poor rental history
  - Credit problems
  - Unpaid utilities
  - History of eviction, foreclosure, or an unpaid balance with a previous landlord
If the client or your agency has a voucher…

- This information needs to be known at the **beginning** of the application process because it can affect how the property manager scores your client’s application.
  - Example: Credit history is not as important IF a voucher will be used to pay the rent.
Key ‘Take-Aways’

- It is the case manager’s responsibility to engage landlords.
- Landlords benefit from working with supportive service providers and we need to inform them of these benefits.
- Units may be there – it’s about finding them and building relationships with landlords and property managers.
Break!
Module 2
Landlord Engagement and Tenant Readiness
Your Mission: Identify strategies to engage landlords with the goal of convincing them to rent to households experiencing homelessness.

1. Identify 5 outreach strategies to identify and engage potential.

2. List 5 creative ideas or incentives (from the least to most expensive) you will use.
Tenant Readiness
What is a good tenant?

### Paying for my apartment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much rent do I pay each month?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When is my rent due each month?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Where do I send my rent payment?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If the rent is late, is there a late fee? How much is the late fee?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rules for my apartment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the rules about noise?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What pets are allowed?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there rules about housecleaning?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Can the landlord enter my apartment?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the rules about someone living with me?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Tenant responsibilities
- Living arrangements
- Healthy Boundaries
- Resourcefulness
Barriers Checklist Example

- No rental history
- Eviction(s) ___
- Large family (3+ children)
- Single parent HH
- Head of HH <18
- Sporadic employment history
- Recent criminal history
- Poor credit/no credit

- Debts/insufficient savings
- No high school diploma/GED
- Insufficient/no income
- Repeated/chronic homelessness
- Recent history of substance abuse
- History of DV
## Housing History Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Residence</th>
<th>Dates of Residence</th>
<th>Reason for Leaving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✕ Emergency Shelter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✕ Permanent housing for formerly homeless</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✕ Psychiatric hospital/facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>✕ Substance abuse treatment</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✕ Hospital (non-psychiatric)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✕ Room, apartment or house that you rent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✕ Apartment/house you own</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✕ Staying/living in a family member’s room, apt., etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✕ Hotel or motel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✕ Place not meant for habitation</td>
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</table>
How can you help support tenant readiness?

- Provide, AND GO OVER move-in packets containing the following:
  - Lease
  - Tenant Rights and Responsibilities
  - Property rules
  - Grievance policy and forms
  - Emergency contact Information
  - Contact information for local resources such as food banks and healthcare clinics
  - Program Agreements
How can you help support tenant readiness?

- Provide “Move-in Supply Kits” containing the following:
  - Cleaning supplies (mop, broom, basic cleaning solution, sponges)
  - Basic toiletries
  - Paper towels, toilet paper
  - First-aid supplies
  - Emergency contact information
  - A pillow
  - Towels and wash cloths
  - Feminine Hygiene Products
  - Plunger
How can you help support tenant readiness?
Key ‘Take-Aways’

- Honesty and integrity are key to cultivating lasting relationships with landlords.
- Tenant readiness is a critical part of the process!
- Be proactive, patient and persistent.
Lunch
Module 3

The Case Manager-Tenant-Landlord Relationship
Case Manager’s Role

- Make or break!
- A relationship with the participant
- Knowledge of what the participant wants and needs
- Translation skills
- Ongoing ties to the participant
- Drive to keep the participant housed
The relationship between the landlord or property manager and ongoing supportive services to the tenant is the foundation of helping clients maintain their tenancy.

Roles need to be clear and consistent.

Information and communication is key!
CM-Landlord Relationship-Building

- Make contact with the landlord and introduce yourself/program
  - Name/title
  - Role/organization
  - 2 key benefits you will offer to landlords
  - What is the “ask” or next step?

- Elevator Pitch Activity!
Case Manager Responsibilities

- What are your responsibilities to the client?
- What are your responsibilities to the landlord?
- What are your responsibilities to your organization/program?
Remember!

- **Honesty**
  - Be honest about what you can and cannot control
  - Don’t make promises you cannot keep
  - Be clear about your role

- **Integrity**
  - Always follow through with what you say you will do
  - Be accountable to the landlord, keep them informed of any changes
Remember that you are the bridge between the landlord/property manager and a potential tenant!
Group Activity

Role play with case study
Key ‘Take-Aways’

- Case management does not end when the client becomes housed!
- The case manager is often the critical link between the client and the landlord and has an important role in not only placing the client into housing but keeping them housed.
- Knowing when and how to communicate between the client and the landlord is a key skill.
- Be able to identify strengths and weaknesses of your client re: his/her role as a tenant and have support and crisis plans in place.
Break
Module 4

Eviction Prevention
Eviction – Defined

- …to expel, remove or dislodge a person, especially a tenant, from land or a building by legal process.
Reasons for Eviction

- Unpaid or late rent
- Criminal activity
- Unauthorized guests
- Neighbor disturbance
- Poor housekeeping
- Other breach in the lease
Helping client understand rights and responsibilities in relation to eviction

Provide clients with possible housing options to keep clients from re-entering into homelessness

Advocating for tenants with landlords for fair treatment during eviction process.
Tenants’ Rights

- Right to live in decent, safe and sanitary housing that is free from environmental hazards

- Right to have repairs completed in a timely manner

- Right to reasonable notice in writing of any non-emergency inspection or entry into the unit

- Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities
Group Activity

Eviction Prevention

CASE STUDIES
Recap: Eviction Prevention 101

- Especially important when housing stock is limited!
- Educate everyone on rights and responsibilities of tenant and landlord
- Regular, ongoing communication with landlord to catch lease violations early
- Agreement between tenant and landlord about working together
- Resources to address lease violations (back rent, clean up, etc.)
- Knowledge of timelines and steps in the legal eviction process
- Crisis planning to avoid eviction
Key ‘Take-Aways’

- Part of case management is eviction prevention.
- There are many different ways to help clients before eviction occurs.
Q & A
Fair Housing Act & Landlord Tenant Laws

- HUD Fair Housing Guidance
- California Handbook for Tenants and Landlords
- California Tenant Rights, Laws and Protections
Additional Resources

- National Alliance to End Homeless: *Rapid Re-housing Toolkit*

- HUD’s Landlord Engagement & Recruitment Additional Resources (May 2015)

- Florida Housing Coalition *Landlord Collaboration Guidebook: Working with Landlords to Help Households Move Out of Homelessness*