

LANDLORD BENEFITS CHECKLIST

Why do landlords like working with
[name of your organization]?

About this Tool: This checklist is a tool to advertise your program to potential landlords. The benefits listed are just examples of services provided by housing search agencies based on interviews with providers around the country. Be sure to modify the list so that it represents your program accurately.

User Tips: As part of your marketing materials, it is important that the piece looks professional and catches people's attention. You may want to customize the checklist by including your organization's name and logo. Similarly, you could use graphics, photos (e.g., a photo of one of your program participants talking to one of your participating landlords), and/or colored paper to give it more of a polished look. This checklist could be mailed out to landlords in your community along with other program materials (e.g., a program brochure, newsletter, or annual report). Or, your housing advocates can use it as a "leave behind" piece when they meet with prospective landlords. Finally, send copies over to your local landlord organization to distribute at their next meeting. Even better, see if you can do a short presentation at their next meeting!

[INSERT 2-3 SENTENCE INTRODUCTION ABOUT YOUR PROGRAM.]

Landlords gain several benefits from participating in our program. Consider the following advantages:

- ✓ Eliminate advertising costs. Working with our program gives you access to a pool of ready-to-rent tenants. Just call us up when you have a vacant unit, and we'll immediately match you up with a client that is looking for housing.
- ✓ "Smart" renters. Our clients have attended training on such topics as personal budgeting, understanding rental agreements, housekeeping and general apartment maintenance, being a good neighbor, etc.
- ✓ Damage/security deposits. Our organization aims to help individuals get back up on their feet. We have found that many low-income clients can afford the monthly rent, but have difficulty saving enough money for their security deposit. As a result, we help clients put together this one-time payment.
- ✓ Clients have access to time-limited subsidies. Again, our organization aims to help individuals get back up on their feet. As a result, eligible clients receive a subsidy to help them cover the first three months of their

rent. This allows clients some time to stabilize and build an emergency fund for the future.

- ✓ Guaranteed rent payments. Our clients are pre-screened and have a stable source of income. However, should one of our clients run into a problem, we have a pool of funds set aside to help get clients through those rough spots. We will also co-sign leases in some situations to virtually eliminate any risk to landlords.
- ✓ Clients are attached to needed services. Some of our clients have special needs, but we work with our clients on an ongoing basis to make sure they have the support they need to succeed. We work with clients to correct past mistakes and prevent future problems, and through our network of partners, clients have access to an array of supportive services.
- ✓ Problem prevention through regular home visits. Our case managers conduct regular home visits to ensure that clients are stabilized in their new environments, that their jobs are going well, and that they are getting the support they need. Regular follow up with clients allows us to identify and address problems early before they become irreparable.
- ✓ Neutral party to mediate problems. Despite the best efforts, problems are sometimes inevitable. However, when problems arise, it can be reassuring to know that there is someone to call. We care as much about our relationship with our landlords as we do our clients. We need everyone to make our program work. The job of a case manager is to be a neutral party, ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and that problems are resolved quickly and impartially. This includes help evicting a client (and covering eviction costs) when warranted.
- ✓ Satisfaction from helping others. Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to live. Some people make mistakes, but everyone deserves a second chance. By helping house our clients, you are playing an integral role not only in helping individuals take charge of their lives, but also in making your community a better place to live.

Interested but still unsure? Why don't you give one of our participating landlords a call:

- [NAME, NUMBER]
- [NAME, NUMBER]

[Note: Remember to ask for permission before listing someone's name. And, make sure they will give your program a good reference!]

And, of course, feel free to call us at anytime. We'd love to hear from you!

- [PROVIDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION]

Landlord Marketing Letter

About this tool: Use this marketing letter separate or in combination with the “landlord benefits checklist” to advertise your program to landlords in your community. Customize it based on your own program and print it out on your agency letterhead. Also, remember to include a telephone number so that landlords know how to get in touch with your agency.

[Name]
[Address]
[City, State, Zip Code]
[Date]

Dear [Name of Landlord]:

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our organization and one of our most exciting programs. [Name of organization/program] is a unique program designed to place homeless individuals into permanent housing. The individuals in our program are working hard to turn their lives around and are in need of a second chance. We hope you will join us in giving them that chance.

We know that it can feel risky accepting tenants who have had problems maintaining housing stability in the past. However, our clients are committed to succeeding, and we are committed to helping them succeed. Yet, we cannot do it alone – landlords literally hold the key to our clients’ futures. That’s why we offer landlords a number of special incentives, including:

- Security deposits. Our organization aims to help individuals get back up on their feet. We have found that many low-income clients can afford the monthly rent, but have difficulty saving enough money for their security deposit. As a result, we help clients put together this one-time payment.
- Guaranteed rent payments. Our clients are pre-screened and have a stable source of income. However, should one of our clients run into a problem, we have a pool of funds set aside to help get clients through those rough spots. We will also co-sign leases in some situations to virtually eliminate any risk to landlords.
- Problem prevention through regular home visits. Our case managers conduct regular home visits to ensure that clients are stabilized in their new environments, that their jobs are going well, and that they are getting the support they need. Regular follow up with clients allows us to identify and address potential problems early on – before they become irreparable.

[Name of your agency/program] has found permanent housing for many formerly homeless individuals since its establishment in [date]. Our program's success is based upon regular communication with our clients and program partners and a commitment to following through on our promises. If you would like to speak with other landlords we have worked with, we would be happy to provide you with some references.

Please keep us in mind when you have future openings at your properties. We would love the opportunity to work with you.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Number]

Landlord Information Template

About this Tool: Whether responding to an ad in the paper or contacting prospective landlords through cold calls, this tool will help you compile more complete information about the landlords in your community as well as the type of housing that is available. (You can then input the information into an excel spreadsheet for easy viewing and sharing.) Having an organized process for collecting information will also prevent landlords from getting multiple calls from your organization for the same information. Finally, if your community ever hopes to build a housing inventory database, you will already have collected some of the data needed to populate it.

User Tips: As an alternative to having your staff fill out this form when talking to landlords, you could send it to prospective landlords along with the *landlord marketing letter* and *landlord benefits checklist* (also included in this toolkit) and ask that they complete it and return it to you. If you have the funds, you could include a self-addressed, stamped envelope to encourage landlords to respond.

Also, this form includes an area to record vacancy information. Because vacancy information is not static, your organization will have to develop a protocol for periodically updating the information. For example, some landlords may be willing to call your organization when they have vacancies. Otherwise, you may want to assign a staff person to call each landlord in your database on a monthly basis to get vacancy updates.

1. Landlord Contact Information:

(Name)

(Address)

(City, State, Zip Code)

(Day Telephone Number)

(Evening Telephone Number)

(Cell Phone Number)

(Fax Number)

(Email Address)

2. Who should contact the landlord (case manager or client)?

3. Apartment Location:

(Address, Apartment #)

(City, State, Zip Code)

4. Building Type: 1-4 units _____ 5-20 units _____ 21-40 units _____ 40+ units _____

5. Type of Housing: Elderly _____ Family _____ Disabled _____ Other _____

6. Vacany(ies) as of ____/____/____

Bedroom Size	# of Units Available	Monthly Rent	Date(s) Available

7. Is/are the unit(s) lead-paint free? Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know _____

8. Upfront Costs: Application Fee \$ _____ First Month \$ _____
Last Month \$ _____ Security Deposit \$ _____
Realtor Fee \$ _____

9. Are utilities included? Y _____ N _____

Partial (Please list) _____

10. Public Transportation: Subway _____ Bus _____ Car Only _____

11. Parking: Street _____ Off-Street _____ Private _____ Private/Pay _____
None _____

12. Amenities: Air Conditioning _____ Handicap Accessible _____
Refrigerator _____ Dishwasher _____
Storage Space _____ Pets Allowed _____ Eat-In Kitchen _____

Laundry Room/ hookup_____ Yard_____

13. Does the owner have other properties in the area? Y_____ N_____

If yes,
where? _____

Comments: _____

LANDLORD-TENANT-CASE MANAGER COMMUNICATION AGREEMENT

About this tool: This communication agreement should be filled out and signed by the tenant and then provided to the landlord to promote open communication between the landlord, tenant, and case manger. The form can easily be modified, but includes those issues most frequently cited by landlords as “red flags.” The important thing is to identify and address problems before they become irreparable. Note that before this agreement is used, you may want to have your client sign an information release authorization form.

Dear [NAME OF LANDLORD]:

My goal is to pay my rent on time, follow the provisions of my lease, keep my apartment in good condition, and get along with my neighbors. I am working with a program that will help me do this, but I need your help. I am asking you to inform both my case manager and me if any of the following occur. You can fill out the form and send it to the addresses below or contact us by telephone. We appreciate your cooperation.

- _____ Landlord has not received full rent by the 3rd day of the month.

- _____ Landlord has received a complaint that there is too much noise from the tenant’s apartment.

- _____ Landlord has significant concerns about the condition of the tenant’s unit. (Examples: Landlord has seen damage or received complaints about bad smells that could be related to garbage.)

- _____ Landlord thinks someone is living in the tenant’s unit who is not named on the lease.

- _____ Landlord thinks someone in the tenant’s unit may be doing something illegal.

- _____ The behavior of someone living in or visiting the tenant’s unit is causing other tenants to complain.

- _____ Landlord has seen something that is a violation of the lease.
Describe: _____

- Other: _____

Please contact me in writing at the following address:

or call me at this number:

Please also contact my case manager (name):

at (agency/address)

or call at this number (phone/cell/pager):

Thank you for your cooperation!

(Signature of Tenant)

(Date)

(Signature of Case worker)

(Date)